

IMAGINED WORLDS:
THE ROLE OF DREAMS, SPACE & THE SUPERNATURAL
IN THE EVOLUTION OF VICTORIAN FANTASY

KIRSTIN ANN MILLS

BA (Hons) (Macquarie University)

Macquarie University

English Department, Faculty of Arts

January 2014

This thesis is presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

CONTENTS

<i>Abstract</i>	v
<i>Statement of Candidate</i>	vii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	ix
I Dreams, Ghosts and the Fourth Dimension: Nineteenth-Century Hyperspace and the Evolution of the Fantasy Genre	1
II Gothic Ghosts and Other Worlds: the Rise of Supernatural Space in the Eighteenth Century	29
III The Gothic Aesthetic: Space and the Supernatural in the Gothic Novels and Beyond	63
IV The Supernatural and Morphean Space: S. T. Coleridge's Romantic-Gothic	89
V At the Limits of the Supernatural: 'The Vast' and Dream Space in De Quincey and Shelley	125
VI Worlds Beyond Worlds: Dreams, Hyperspace and the Birth of Modern Fantasy	171
Conclusion	209
<i>Bibliography</i>	215

IMAGINED WORLDS: THE ROLE OF DREAMS, SPACE & THE SUPERNATURAL IN THE EVOLUTION OF VICTORIAN FANTASY

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the central role played by the concept of space in the development of Victorian fantasy throughout the nineteenth century. This concept of space had three facets – the spatial imagination, hyperspace, and other worlds – and connected with ideas about the mind and dreaming that were also prominent throughout this period. In particular, the literary deployment of the concept of hyperspace — a space beyond the natural world — was fundamental to the development of fantasy genres. Using historicised literary analysis, this study shows that this concept of hyperspace was a fundamental and sustained aspect of the British imagination from the Gothic period to the late Victorian era, when it was theorized for the first time. This new perspective on space also permits a challenge to modern critical constructions of how dream worlds were conceptualized. It does so by focusing on a large group of British authors who wrote on dreams, space and the supernatural, including Walpole, Coleridge, De Quincey, Kingsley, MacDonald and Morris.

Victorian enquiries into the nature of dreams, the mind and the supernatural can be seen as investigations into alternative spaces of existence: realms and worlds beyond those of traditional three-dimensional physical experience. These investigations into the nature of hyperspace (what it contained, how it interacted with the three-dimensional human world and how humans could perceive and understand it) were undertaken across a vast cross-section of Victorian society right to the end of the century. It is this energetic hunt for evidence of spaces beyond our traditional three dimensions that, I suggest, contributed to the development of the fantasy genre, where literature of the supernatural increasingly became seen as an appropriate vehicle through which to explore the possibilities and conditions of other worlds.

The role of these investigations into space in effecting the evolution of the fantasy genre, and in turn, the role of fantastic literature in driving the supernatural and spatial investigations, is the focus of this study. This development, I argue, occurred along a trajectory from the late-eighteenth-century Gothic literature of the fantastic to the later nineteenth-century novels that were situated in ‘secondary worlds’ in which the supernatural existed as natural phenomena and in which occur the first examples of the modern fantasy genre.

I certify that this thesis is entirely my own work and that I have given fully documented reference to the work of others. This thesis has not previously, in part or in whole, been submitted for assessment in any formal course of study.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the course of my research I have become indebted to several people, for whose inspiring, grounding, and comforting presence in my life I am eternally grateful. Firstly, my most sincere thanks are to my PhD supervisor, Professor Antonina Harbus, for her unyielding patience, guidance, and support over these last few years. I could not have been more fortunate in my supervisor, from whom I received the first encouragement of both my writing and my path through the academic study of dreams, the supernatural, and fantasy literature. Her intelligence, sensitivity and her gift for always knowing just what to say, whether on the page or off, gave both a spirit and an anchor to my years of research in this exciting field. Likewise, for the valuable advice and valued encouragement of my associate supervisor, Dr Lee O'Brien, I am also thankful.

I am also incredibly fortunate in the network of family that has supported me throughout this experience. To my mother, Ann, in particular, who supported me in so many ways while I undertook this project, and Chris as well, I am deeply grateful. Likewise, my sisters, Megan and Rebecca, whose love, humour, and allied support I will always cherish, and also my Grandparents, whose love and support are invaluable. I love each of them.

Most particularly, I wish to thank Ash, who was there to support me through thick and thin, under any conditions, without any expectation of return for his years of help, comfort and guidance. An intelligent and sensitive sounding board for my ideas – particularly when I needed clarification or encouragement the most – my rock, and my best friend, I honestly don't know what I would do without him.

For my Grandpa, John Muncey, whose boundless imagination and gift for story-telling would rival even George MacDonald's, and through whom my love of fantasy and imagination was inherited, inspired and first brought to life. And for the two guiding lights in my life, my Dad and Ash, who, through everything, never ceased to believe in me, to see the best in me, and to offer the encouragement, faith and support to help me bring it to light, and who, most importantly, always saw my best achievement as simply being myself. To you, this thesis is dedicated.

DREAMS, GHOSTS & THE FOURTH DIMENSION: NINETEENTH-CENTURY HYPERSPACE & THE EVOLUTION OF THE FANTASY GENRE

‘I am quite in the habit of dreaming stories.’
- R. L. Stevenson, 1887

‘It is quite fitting that one who finds the infinity of space in which our universe is situated too narrow for his use should, in his imaginative power, outdo the ordinary writer of fairy tales, when he evokes a universe sufficiently extended for his purposes.’
- S. Newcomb, 1898

The British Romantic and Victorian eras saw the rapid and coterminous rise of three important and interrelated phenomena: a deep and sustained public fascination with the supernatural, an equally enthusiastic interest in dreams and alternative states of mind, and the appearance in the late nineteenth century of the first modern fantasy novels. While these areas have separately received increasing critical attention in recent years, what connects these three phenomena as aspects of one of the most significant literary and cultural developments of the nineteenth century has not yet been investigated. This thesis addresses this dynamic combination of ideas. It explores the nineteenth-century fascination with the supernatural and dreams in order to test the hypothesis that the Romantic and Victorian explorations of these phenomena conceptualised them in terms of hyperspace, and, more specifically, that the literary deployment of various forms of hyperspace, such as supernatural ‘other worlds’ and dreamscapes, was central to the development of the modern fantasy genre.

Notoriously, many Victorians were deeply interested in the supernatural. This fascination:

ranged from the wishful make-believe of many of those who write about the fairies and other supernatural figures of folklore, through the circumstantial belief of those visited by true dreams, premonitions and telepathic encounters, to the sometimes unwilling, sometimes eager belief of Spiritualists and Theosophists and the alternately enthusiastic and doubtful faith of Christians of all denominations. (Bown et al. 1)

‘Both fearful and terrible and ardently desired’, the supernatural was, for the Victorians, ‘a spooky sense that there was more to the world than the everyday, and an intimation that

reality might be transfigured by something above and beyond' (Bown et al. 1). Like this widespread interest in the supernatural, it is now widely acknowledged that the Victorians were acutely interested in dreams and other alternative states of mind. In the beginning of the century the Romantics, led by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, accompanied early brain scientists in an investigation of the mind and its abilities, a sustained line of inquiry that eventually led to the development, at the other end of the century, of Freud's theories of psychology. Thirdly, it can also be observed that during this century there arose a distinct interest in what is now called 'fantasy' literature: against the steady flow of nineteenth-century 'realism' rose a formidable response in novels that focused on the supernatural, and that eventually came to be set in 'secondary worlds' – imaginary settings located elsewhere than our own primary world. These three seemingly unconnected events characterize a large part of the Victorian era's intellectual preoccupations, and have recently attracted various critical attention, but what follows, that the Victorians were equally, if not more intrigued by the concept of space, is less well understood or even acknowledged. Yet indeed, such a preoccupation with space, or rather, a desire to master and understand space, connects the three events above in what emerges as one of the most long-lasting and influential aspects of the development of ideas in the nineteenth century: a complex matrix of personal and cultural enquiry into the very nature of existence, and into the possibility of higher-dimensional space.

In this view, the Victorian enquiries into the nature of dreams, the mind and the supernatural are revealed as investigations into alternative spaces of existence: realms and worlds beyond those of traditional three-dimensional physical experience. This investigation into the nature of higher-dimensional space, or *hyperspace*, (what it contained, how it interacted with the three-dimensional human world and how humans could perceive and understand it) was undertaken across a vast cross-section of Victorian society, and toward the end of the century would encompass a large portion of Britain in a passionate debate. It is this little-examined investigation, this search for evidence of spaces beyond our traditional three dimensions, that, I suggest, contributed to the development of the modern fantasy genre, where literature of the supernatural increasingly became seen as an appropriate vehicle through which to explore the possibilities and conditions of other worlds. The role of this investigation in effecting the evolution of the fantasy genre, and in turn, the role of fantastic literature in driving the supernatural-spatial investigation, is the substantive focus of this study. This development, I argue, occurred along a trajectory from the late-eighteenth-century Gothic novels of Walpole and Radcliffe, which were largely realist in nature with aspects of the supernatural injected into them, through the intermediate works of Coleridge, Mary Shelley, De Quincey, Dickens,

Kingsley, and Carroll, which variously explored the notion of dreams as a liminal space between the natural and supernatural worlds, to the later nineteenth-century novels of George MacDonald and William Morris that were situated in ‘secondary worlds’ and in which the supernatural existed as natural phenomena. It is in these last novels, and their creation of a supernatural space unconnected with the everyday world, that we find the first examples of the modern fantasy genre.

SPACE & HYPERSPACE

To say that the nineteenth century was preoccupied with space is in some respects unremarkable, for every human society and culture throughout history has been concerned with seeking knowledge and mastery over the spaces in which they exist. From the expanding borders of Egypt’s Thutmose III to Newton’s theorems of gravity, humans have sought to discover, conquer and understand the spaces in which they live.¹ In this pursuit, blankness is anathema: where physical evidence could not explain, imagination filled the gaps; the blank spaces on maps were filled with demons and monsters, and the laws that we attribute to physics and nature were accounted for by the many deities that have been worshipped over time.² Yet as the human engine progressed and the nineteenth century wheeled around, the blank spaces on the world map became few and far between: fairies and ghosts were driven from their woodlands and fens by the steam and turbines of industrial revolution.³ Anthropologists and palaeontologists were born, and the monsters of the past became the dinosaurs and foreign cultures that could be observed and measured. The countryside was divided and coded while the cities expanded, governed by new ideas of social organization, class and manners. In the three-dimensional world of years past there were no more blank spaces. For supernatural phenomena there was only one way to go – into space-beyond-space: a space above and beyond that of the physical world. One that had been theorised in varying

¹ For a broad history of ideas of space in the Western world prior to the nineteenth century, see Grant’s *Much Ado About Nothing: Theories of Space and Vacuum from the Middle Ages to the Scientific Revolution*.

² This idea is eloquently explored by Purkiss in her book *Troublesome Things: A History of Fairies and Fairy Stories*, in which she traces fairies back to the ancient desire to populate the darkness with demons and spirits.

³ Though the juxtaposition of city and country when it came to folklore and the supernatural was already well underway by the nineteenth century, where it was invariably bound up with binaries that opposed the ‘uneducated’ superstition of the country against the ‘educated’ rationalism of the city, it began to take particular hold with the Industrial Revolution in the late eighteenth century, where it was challenged by the newly emerging stories of ghosts within the city limits (see Chapter Three).

degrees across history but that would come into its own when it became the only blank space left to the nineteenth century: hyperspace.

Simply defined as ‘space of more than three dimensions’ (OED), the notion of hyperspace gained traction in various forms throughout the nineteenth century, even before the term was coined, as writers, philosophers, and, increasingly, scientists began to imagine the possibility of realms and dimensions beyond those of everyday experience. As the industrial and social expansion of the nineteenth century increased, the fairies and ghosts of folklore retreated into vanishing fairylands and invisible spirit-realms that lay beyond the limits of the natural world, and which, in their higher-dimensional ‘beyond’ quality, prefigured later mathematical concepts of hyperspace. Indeed, so close was the parallel between mythological and folkloric supernatural space, and the later notions of hyperspace, that by the mid-nineteenth century the supernatural ‘other worlds’ imagined within mythology and folklore were being granted potential scientific reality in terms of these emerging mathematical theories, as science followed the footsteps of literature and began to conceptualise higher-dimensional realms in which supernatural beings could exist, invisible, for the most part, to the three-dimensional human world.

Crucial to the idea of hyperspace is the notion of borders and limits: higher-dimensional space was kept tantalisingly beyond human comprehension by the thin veils and vanishing lights of fairyland; the spiritual realm ‘crossed’ into our world via ghostly haunting. Like the four-dimensional beings that would later be imagined by writers such as Edwin Abbott, communication between these realms was often one-way, the human comprehension of higher-dimensional beings limited by a three-dimensional perspective. Access into fairyland is, therefore, denied to those who would wish to return⁴ and ‘crossing over’ into the ghostly spirit-realm was generally believed to be a one-way trip. There were, however, ways to enter higher-dimensional space for a short time: the key to comprehension of higher realms was perception and through dreams one was popularly believed to achieve such an altered state of mind.⁵ The role of the imagination thereby became increasingly important, and soon enough

⁴ Keats presents a chilling example of this fairy lore in his poem ‘La Belle Dame Sans Merci,’ where the knight is left ‘alone and palely loitering on the cold hill’s side’, stranded between worlds in a death-like pallor, which, as Silver notes, ‘is the usual fate of the folklore figures who have dared to enter and have been expelled from the fairy kingdom’ (18).

⁵ This idea continued from the Romantic era to include Robert Louis Stevenson in the 1880s who wrote in his ‘A Chapter on Dreams’ that he was visited in his dreams by brownies who suggested ideas for his novels (247-8).

the limitless space of the mind was explored as another kind of beyond-space.⁶ Indeed, it was during the beginning of the nineteenth century that early brain scientists were engaged in a strong debate over the relationship between the tangible brain and the intangible mind.⁷ The spatial problem engendered in the brain-mind relationship was characterised by the unease over the increasing reports of telepathy that were investigated across the century: telepathy is only paranormal if considered in a spatial context where a mind is inherently contained within one brain in one physical location. That dreams and imagination seemed to transcend this spatial distinction and to occur in a kind of space of their own (what Coleridge termed 'Somnial' or 'Morphean Space') was a point of great interest for the Romantics and Victorians who tried to contain the mind within three-dimensional borders.

There is certainly much primary material throughout the nineteenth century that suggests a particular concern with the limits and possibilities of space, and more particularly, demonstrates a sense of space as malleable and divided into multiple realms that can all exist within the same perceivably singular space. Interestingly, like the supernatural that was so often perceived to exist within this space, it seems that many people in the nineteenth century had something to say about the matter and, whether they agreed with it or not, the subject was on almost everybody's lips. From earnest treatises on accounts of fairies, ghosts and goblins to philosophical writing on the nature of dream-space, during the beginning of the century, ideas of hyperspace were implied through the motifs and particularly spatial language used to express occurrences of dreams and the supernatural. These motifs were taken up by writers such as Coleridge and De Quincey, who explored the spatial caverns of the mind and the meeting point between reality and dreams. At the same time, the clash between the

⁶ The role of the imagination in perceiving the supernatural was often associated with a child-like mind. Children, associated with dreaming, were often the only characters in folktales who could see the fairies that would capture them. For example, in a 1782 tale from Germany, a boy and his father are riding together at night when the boy is suddenly approached by the Erl-King (of fairies) who wishes to take him away. The boy is scared of the Erl-King's whispers and songs but the father insists that the boy hears nothing but the leaves rattling in the wind and sees nothing but the mist and willows. When the boy cries out at the Erl-King's grasp, which marks the Erl-King's forced abduction, the father realises the danger and rides home fast, only to discover upon arrival that the child is already dead (cited in Purkiss 217). This tale not only illustrates the unique awareness of the supernatural attributed to children and the impassable boundary between the fairy and mortal worlds, but also the spiritual nature of the boy's transcendence into the fairy realm: he has supposedly been 'taken' by the Erl-King and yet his mortal body remains behind. Interestingly, this same idea of child-like awareness often applies to women, especially pregnant women, as in the folk story of Susan Swapper, who sees the fairies that wish to carry her away though her husband can 'see nothing' (Purkiss 116-7). This idea of the freedom and truth offered by a child-like imagination would become a crucial part of the nineteenth century literary exploration of the supernatural. See the discussion of Kingsley below.

⁷ See discussion below.

supernatural and natural worlds found particular resonance in the Gothic, from which Coleridge and De Quincey would draw heavily in formulating their own ideas.⁸

Yet it was not until the mid-nineteenth century that the higher dimensions that had long been implied by artists, writers and philosophers began to be explored in mathematical and scientific theories. As Margaret Wertheim states, ‘although Einstein’s name is the one now most often associated with the idea of a fourth-dimension, the concept originally emerged in the mid-nineteenth century’ with the development of non-Euclidean geometry (190-1). Non-Euclidean geometry is the theory of measuring curved surfaces (where the sum of angles in a triangle plotted over a curved surface equals more than the one hundred and eighty degrees prescribed by Euclidean geometry). Mathematicians who explored this idea, such as Carl Friedrich Gauss in the 1860s, postulated that space itself may be curved: a postulation that necessarily involves at least a fourth spatial dimension in which to curve three-dimensional space. As Wertheim explains, ‘just as a two-dimensional napkin can be folded within three-dimensional space by bringing together two distance corners, so too within a four-dimensional space two parts of a three-dimensional space can be “folded” together’ (Wertheim 193). ‘From the 1860s on, interest in this new geometry rapidly effervesced into a public fascination with higher-than-three-dimensional space’:

First explored by writers, artists and mystically inclined philosophers, this seemingly fantastical concept would eventually give rise to an extraordinary new scientific vision of reality, one in which space itself would come to be seen as the ultimate substrate of all existence. Here, we are not just talking about the extra dimension of time, but also about extra *spatial* dimensions. (Wertheim 191)

Previously initiated by Reimann in Germany, theories of hyperspace gained force in Britain from the 1870s and 1880s through the writings of men such as William Clifford and particularly Charles Hinton, ‘foremost among the new Hyperspace philosophers’, whose 1888 publication *A New Era of Thought* ‘outlined a system by which people could supposedly train themselves to become aware of the true four-dimensional nature of space’ (Wertheim 194-5). Again, we can note the specific cognitive aspect that Hinton proposes is necessary in interaction between spatial dimensions, where the key to travelling between dimensions, or at least comprehending them, involves changing one’s spatial perception.

However, it was this difficulty of perception that proved to be the most pervasive argument against the notion of hyperspace. In 1884, four years before Hinton’s publication, Edwin

⁸ See discussion of Coleridge and De Quincey below, and also Chapters Four and Five.

Abbott published his story *Flatland*, which investigated how a three-dimensional being would appear to the inhabitants of Flatland, a two-dimensional universe. The inhabitants of Flatland have great difficulty contemplating the intrusion of three-dimensional beings into their world because these three-dimensional creatures seem to disappear and reappear at will as they intersect and pass through the two-dimensional plane of Flatland. The concept of three-dimensional space is outlawed in Flatland as it is thought to be impossible. The analogy between this and the human world attempting to understand higher-than-three-dimensional space, and particularly the supernatural realm and its ghostly phenomena, to which it began to be related, is clear.

HYPERSPACE & THE SUPERNATURAL REALM

The connection between folkloric and literary ideas of supernatural ‘beyond’ dimensions and the emerging mathematical theories of hyperspace is clearly shown in an 1898 article by the American S. Newcomb entitled ‘The Philosophy of Hyper-Space’, and it is worth quoting at length. He writes:

There is a region of mathematical thought which might be called the *fairyland* of geometry. The geometer here disports himself in a way which, to the non-mathematical thinker, suggests the wild flight of an unbridled imagination rather than the sober sequence of mathematical demonstration. Imaginative he certainly does become, if we apply this term to every conception which lies outside of our human experience. Yet the results of the hypotheses introduced into this imaginary universe are traced out with all the rigor of geometric demonstration. *It is quite fitting that one who finds the infinity of space in which our universe is situated too narrow for his use should, in his imaginative power, outdo the ordinary writer of fairy tales, when he evokes a universe sufficiently extended for his purposes.* (my emphasis. 1)

This connection between ideas of the supernatural and the new philosophy that was, according to Newcomb, ‘now very generally called hyper-space’ (1) was greatly extended once it was enthusiastically adopted by proponents of spiritualism and the supernatural as ‘proof’ of what they had previously hypothesized, and folk legend had believed. For spiritualists, the notion of hyperspace allowed supernatural phenomena to exist simultaneously within our world and without by existing in a higher dimension. Fairies and ghosts became possible by reflecting higher-dimensional beings ‘crossing through’ our

dimension. Even Hinton himself seemed to suggest the possibility when he described his book as:

An attempt, in the most elementary and simple domain, to pass from the lower to the higher. In pursuing it the mind passes from one kind of intuition to a higher one, and with that transition the horizon of thought is altered. It becomes clear that there is a physical existence transcending the ordinary physical existence; and one becomes inclined to think that the right direction to look is, not away from matter to spiritual existences but towards the discovery of conceptions of higher matter, and thereby of those material existences whose definite relations to us are apprehended as spiritual intuitions. (xiv)

Spiritualism had already been a passionate topic in the public imagination for some time. As the *Illustrated London News* wrote regretfully in June of 1853, even ‘matter-of-fact people of the nineteenth century’ were ‘plunged all at once into the bottomless deep of Spiritualism’. Speaking broadly, it noted that:

Railroads, steam, and electricity, and the indubitable wonders which they have wrought, have not proved powerful enough to supersede and destroy that strong innate love of the supernatural which seems implanted in the human mind. Thousands of people in Europe and America are turning tables, and obstinately refusing to believe that physical and mechanical means are in any way connected in the process. Hats, too, are turned, as well as the heads that wear them. (cited in Noakes 25-6)

To this ‘innate love of the supernatural’ the hyper-spatial ‘proof’ of spiritualism was welcome, and the topic of spiritualism and its relationship with higher dimensions became even more widespread in the public imagination. The connection drawn between spiritualist views and hyperspace is illustrated by the Christian spiritualist A. T. Schofield in 1888 with his book *Another World*, in which he argues that ‘a higher world than ours is not only conceivably possible, but probable’, and that:

The spiritual world agrees largely in its mysterious laws, in its language which is foolishness to us, in its miraculous appearances and interpositions...with what by analogy would be the laws, language and claims of a fourth dimension....Though the glorious material universe extends beyond the utmost limits of our vision,...that does not prevent the spiritual world and its beings, and heaven and hell from being by our very side. (81, 86)

Such public interest in the supernatural could not last long without exerting considerable influence over literary output, and it is poetic that the literary origins of ideas of hyperspace in the nineteenth century would be returned to as these ideas grew in popularity. While the physical reality of hyperspace had only been implied in previous literature, where beings from

the supernatural ‘other world’ had intruded into the natural world, as the notion of hyperspace achieved more literary and scientific attention, the kind of novels that had previously couched the supernatural within the framing device of the dream gradually began to open up to completely supernatural ‘other’ worlds.

These ‘secondary worlds’ as Tolkien would later call them, were literary settings that were completely separate from the primary world of our own existence, and they often operated according to vastly different rules. Where the protagonists of Ann Radcliffe, Mary Shelley and Charles Dickens had wrestled with the strange and often terrifying supernatural intrusions into the everyday world, characters now began to step into completely realised ‘other worlds’, often through the vehicle, as mentioned above, of the dream. Carroll’s Alice endured trials in the strange underground Wonderland, MacDonald’s Anodos entered the eerie fairyland that seems a spiritual world superimposed over the ordinary human world, and Morris’s novels began to be set in completely new worlds such as the Glittering Plain and Fair Elfland, where magic and the supernatural were acceptable laws of nature (and which allowed greater freedom for social commentary, of which Morris would make full use). It is across this trajectory from the intrusion of the fantastic into an otherwise realistic setting, through the dream-realms of the supernatural, to the description of completely secondary worlds that we can trace the evolution of the fantasy genre, and its important relationship with the fervent nineteenth-century examination of spatial reality.

DREAMS AS LIMINAL SPACES BETWEEN THE NATURAL & SUPERNATURAL WORLDS

It is during the Romantic and Victorian eras, when society, and academia, turn to their shadow and take up the supernatural, fantasy and folklore as serious subjects that ‘fantasy’ as a genre is allowed to emerge. As more conscious space was allowed for imaginative and ‘beyond’ subjects like ghosts, fairies and other worlds, literature began to reflect it, with increasingly mainstream narratives dedicating more and more space to the ‘other worlds’ of the supernatural. Such transgression ‘beyond’ the bounds of the natural world, particularly via a medium such as the dream, involves the concept of liminality, and it is this notion of the liminal and its connotations that characterises the development of supernaturalism, dreams and fantastic literature from their mythological and folkloric origins to their cultural, scientific

and literary culminations in the nineteenth century. First conceptualised by anthropologist Arnold Van Gennep in 1909, and expanded upon by Victor Turner in 1967, the concept of liminality was originally used to describe the transitory stage in ritualistic rites of passage in which the subject would move from one social state to another.⁹ During the process, the subject would cross a 'threshold' between one state and the next, and for the duration that they inhabited this threshold, they would become indistinct, hybrid, ambiguous – neither 'one' nor 'the other' but 'in-between'. The concept has since been applied throughout cultural, psychological, literary and other studies to denote similar states of 'transitionality', 'betwixt-and-between', 'threshold' and 'borderland' between different spheres, whether they be cultural, psychological or spatial. In these uses, the concept often retains the sense of difference, othering and potential threat that the anthropological meaning of liminality includes: a notion that what exists in the liminal space is different from what exists in the space before the limit.

Importantly, dreams and the supernatural are by nature liminal ideas.¹⁰ They perpetually straddle the divide between reality and fantasy, science and imagination, physiological and psychological, material and immaterial, natural and supernatural. Supernatural beings such as fairies and ghosts, often linked in literature and folklore, are immaterial spirits that can also behave and communicate as if they had material, corporeal being. Historically, they often bear a relationship with certain material locales, themselves often liminal in nature at the margins of existence – woodlands at the edge of town, road crossings, graveyards – and in such liminality also span the liminal borders between the material and spirit worlds. Writing about the fairy faith in Cornwall, Henry Jenner summarises the general attitudes to fairies and the close parallel this held with notions of hyperspace when he wrote that the fairies were believed to exist 'on a "plane" different from that of humans, though occupying the same space' (cited in Silver 40). The space they tread is between the material and immaterial, and they can move in both worlds: neither living nor dead, they come from un-life, and the very 'in-between' state of this existence makes them perpetually liminal beings. In Victorian popular culture the fairies undergo a 'population explosion', infiltrating art, literature and the stage (Purkiss 220) and this rising popularity of the supernatural as a feature of mainstream literature occasioned even more widespread speculation on the spatial reality of the 'fairy realms' and spirit worlds themselves. In Victorian times they become uniquely associated

⁹ For a thorough discussion of liminality in relation to rites of passage, see Van Gennep's *The Rites of Passage*, and Turner's 'Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in *Rites de Passage*.'

¹⁰ McNeill argues that 'a major characteristic of all things supernatural' is their liminality – their state of being 'betwixt-and-between' (9).

with children, themselves liminal beings caught between birth and adulthood.¹¹ In this way, much folklore and later fantasies utilise the liminal in both its spatial and cultural senses, involving the transition of the protagonist through some rite of passage via liminal spaces on the borders of the known world that are populated with liminal beings.

Likewise, any human interaction with the supernatural world, such as ghost sightings or séances, was also liminal by nature, existing at a meeting point – a borderland – between the natural and supernatural worlds. The vast appeal of such attempts at interaction with the spirit world throughout the nineteenth century can partly be explained not only by the Victorian desire to master their environments, and so their attempt to push beyond what they perceived as limits to their world, but also in the sense of threat that such ambiguous ‘betwixt-and-between’ beings traditionally pose to the social order. Supernatural beings, in the very act of their ambiguity, threaten the social stability that depends on prevailing notions of reality and methods of organising knowledge (McNeill 9). This sense of threat is most obvious in Gothic literature, from the earliest examples of Walpole and Radcliffe to the later nineteenth-century texts such as Stoker’s *Dracula*, in which the transgression of ambiguous supernatural beings into the natural order threatens not only the lives of the protagonists, but the very fabric of society.¹²

In the late eighteenth century, when the British public first turned to the supernatural on a grand scale, literature trod its borders with terrified restraint, representing the intrusion of ghosts in an otherwise realistic, earthly setting. The literature that most keenly explored this, the Gothic, hovers at the limit between the natural and supernatural worlds. Yet though the Gothic novels were immensely popular, reflecting the unprecedented interest in the supernatural as early as the mid eighteenth century, they were also heavily censured within a large part of the public imagination, and it was only once the Romantic writers took up the Gothic mantle of the supernatural, and linked it with their interest in dreams and other alternative states of mind that the supernatural was elevated to a level of critical respect and intellectual stability that would see its continued evolution within the developing novels of the later nineteenth century. Through the developments of the Romantics and their interests in dreams, the terrified steps of the Gothic writers became the intrigued transgressions of the

¹¹ Purkiss makes the insightful connection between modern conceptions of fairies and the child-demons of ancient Greek culture, transformed in the womb, which, she argues, ‘like the tomb, is the place where a crossing from death to life is made’ (16).

¹² For an insightful analysis of the Gothic’s use of liminality as a trope and textual practice, see Aguirre’s ‘Liminal Terror: The Poetics of Gothic Space.’

Romantic poets into dreamworlds. It is during this time, and through the work of Coleridge in particular, that dreams become equated with the kind of ‘beyond’ space that the supernatural was imagined to occur within – the fairy realms and spirit worlds. Dreams become a liminal space opened up between the natural and supernatural worlds through which consciousness – or the supernatural – might pass to access ‘the other side’. It is in the poetry of the Romantics that the dream as a vehicle into the supernatural realm reaches its height of popularity.

As the century wore on and scientific and literary interest in the supernatural and psychology grew, so too did the courage of writers teetering on the brink of the supernatural world. By the mid-nineteenth century, in the work of writers such as Kingsley and MacDonald, protagonists use the vehicle of the dream to venture further and further into fully-fledged supernatural worlds. The limits between this world and the next are not only explored, but are now completely transgressed. This development across the century is clear: where fantastic elements creep into the fundamentally realist (if sensational) novels of Radcliffe like unbidden yet inextinguishable shadows, or where employed in full as in Dickens’s ghost stories, they are ambiguously entertained and rendered uncertain by various framing devices, by the novels of MacDonald fantasy holds its own as the primary philosophy guiding the events of the narrative. Across the nineteenth century, fantasy moves from the dream-like borders of perception into the space of conscious engagement just as the protagonist of MacDonald’s *Phantastes* moves into the hyperspace of fairyland through the transformative powers of the dream. These ‘beyond’ spaces are explored in increasing detail until the developments in the 1880s of theories of hyperspace – a scientific development that seemed to confirm what literature and the spiritualists had been investigating in different languages for decades. Once this confirmation existed, secondary worlds erupt with unbounded confidence, unrestricted by dream frames or psychological trappings – corporeal, real and disconnected from the primary world – hyperspace in its own right. As we shall see, when novels begin to depict a ‘consistent presentation of the unreal’, modern fantasy has begun (Harris 2).

THE FANTASTIC & THE FANTASY GENRE

In this hypothesis, ‘fantasy’ has a particular definition that involves not only elements (or acceptance) of the supernatural, but also a setting within a form of ‘secondary world’. This

modern definition of fantasy, largely inspired by the works of Tolkien, is popularly accepted in the public mind today but it involves several problematic assumptions that should be explored further. As Prickett demonstrates in his seminal *Victorian Fantasy*, ‘at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the word “fantasy” changed its meaning radically in the course of a single generation’ (1). Since the Middle Ages, the word had been used to express a mental image, particularly a mental image of something that does not exist. The term was often used in a semi-pejorative tone, implying ‘delusion, hallucination or simply wishful thinking’ (1).¹³ In short, ‘it signified the kind of imagination one might expect to find in madmen – or in children’ (2). Yet by 1825, following the rise of Romanticism and particularly the writings, both creative and philosophical, of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, words such as ‘fantasy’ and ‘imagination’ took on radically different meanings. ‘People began to feel that the very unreality of fantasy gave its creations a kind of separate existence, an autonomy, even a “real life” of their own’ and madmen and children suddenly became objects of interest rather than of derision (2). Importantly, ‘fantasy’ was linked with dreams: in contrast to the celebrated ‘imagination’ (‘the supreme gift of the poet, the creative power of artist’), ‘fantasy’ came to represent ‘the gift of dreams; the haunting magic of Keats’s *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*; it was delightful, alluring, compulsive, disturbing, nightmare and hag-ridden. It was akin to madness’ (6). Prickett has suggested that this dark and alluring dream-like fantasy was the ‘underside, or obverse, of the Victorian imagination’ (9): the repressed and therefore endlessly fascinating and compelling underside of the Victorian enlightenment. In this way, it can be seen to bear a peculiar resemblance to the dark and alluring supernaturalism of folktales and beliefs that have historically existed on the fringes of society, a subject of the folk imagination that was kept from serious academic study.

Yet one must be wary of oversimplifying the binary between ‘fantasy’ and ‘realism’ in the nineteenth century, for it was characteristically a period in which science and supernaturalism could, and frequently did, cohabit the same intellectual spaces. It is crucial to realize that the version of the nineteenth century that we have often been presented with is the one that has been edited, anthologized and prioritized according to the values of the collectors, historians, critics, teachers, and writers over the course of the twentieth century: values that did not necessarily reflect those of the nineteenth century itself. As mainstream literature moved toward the realist, modernist and postmodern styles of the twentieth century – what Stockwell globally refers to as the ‘mainstream, post-Romantic realist tradition’ (9) – so the anthologizing of the previous century favoured literature and history that reflected these

¹³ See also ‘fantasy’ OED Online.

values. Due to this selective historicising, the nineteenth-century interest in the spiritual and supernatural (a fascination that lasted well into the early twentieth century) and the volumes of fantastic fiction it produced, have been largely overlooked in favour of the novels of staunch realism and Victorian moralising in the creation and study of literary canons. However, to view a century exclusively according to modern criteria for status and value is reductive and inaccurate. An awareness of the extent to which the nineteenth century imagined, desired and even passionately investigated the potential realities of the supernatural – and particularly the space it occupied – via the medium of fantastic literature is crucial for a fuller understanding of the scope of the nineteenth-century historical, literary and scientific developments and interactions, and offers interesting insight into the evolution of concepts of the numinous and impossible, and their representation and exploration in textual forms.

When our scope is widened to include the cultural, scientific, medical, psychological and political contexts within which nineteenth-century literature was produced, it becomes clear that the fantastic in literature was a much more prominent aspect of nineteenth-century culture than has previously been recognised. This study aims to challenge the notion that fantasy or fantastic elements – the supernatural in literature – developed quietly on the fringes of more ‘serious’ literature, relatively unnoticed. Indeed, from the outset, it was borne up at the centre of wide-ranging public debates on the nature of reading, philosophy, existence and morality that involved the most eminent thinkers, writers and public figures of the day. It is from a context of deep social debate laced with a curiosity and a desire to explore unknowns and expose hoax that literary fantasy in the nineteenth century is borne. Keeping this in mind, it can be seen that the growth of the fantastic in literature over the course of the Romantic and Victorian eras is an important part of any well-rounded view of these eras.

Yet, the notion of what constitutes the ‘fantasy’ genre, if it may be called a genre at all, is problematic for many critics. Importantly, the definition of fantasy has often been bound up with spatial qualifiers: for Tolkien, in his influential essay ‘On Fairy-Stories’, fantasy is ‘the making or glimpsing of Other-worlds’ where a ‘Secondary World’ is presented which is not merely a mimetic representation of our own ‘Primary World’, but a presentation of ‘images of things...not to be found in our primary world at all, or are generally believed not to be found there’ (47-8). The same holds for Rosemary Jackson who discusses the ‘spectral region of the fantastic, whose imaginary world is neither entirely “real”...nor entirely “unreal”...but is located somewhere indeterminately between the two’ (19). Yet many other critics have hotly debated the notion of fantasy as a genre or a mode, and this debate often involves the very

nature and behaviour of genres themselves. Many critics and readers alike rigidly define what a text must include to be classified as 'fantasy':¹⁴ as Frow summarises, 'the traditional and still prevalent view of genre' is one that sees genre as a 'rigid trans-historical class exercising control over the texts which it generates', and, concurrently, sees texts as 'members of previously defined classes which have causal priority over them' (23).

This approach has led to a great many difficulties over the years of critical analysis, and is distinctly unhelpful when considering the literary fantastic, which has traditionally been notoriously hard to define.¹⁵ A more helpful approach is one elucidated by Frow, who suggests that genre and texts exist in a dynamic process of performance and 'productive elaboration rather than of derivation or determination' (24). Far from seeing genres as static objects or forms that may be identified within a text, Frow sees genre as 'a universal dimension of textuality', actively generating and shaping knowledge of the world, and inextricably bound up within discourse and power relations (2). Texts 'do not "belong" to genres but are, rather, uses of them', and within any given text usually operates a multiplicity of genres: 'the textual event is not a member of a genre-class because it may have membership in many genres, and because it is never fully defined by "its" genre' (23). In this model, fantasy appears alongside many other genres within various works of fiction, and it is the interplay between these genres within a single work of fiction that creates its particular tone. Thus, the popular Harry Potter series by J. K. Rowling successfully combines fantasy with detective fiction and the traditional *Bildungsroman* within a general framework of the realistic boarding-school tale. It is in this fashion that I am investigating the evolution of the fantasy genre within the nineteenth century as it is taken up and elaborated upon by various texts across the era. In this investigation, it is not only unnecessary, but would be erroneous to claim any specific texts as solely belonging to the fantasy genre. It is far more useful, and offers far greater insight into the workings and preoccupations of the nineteenth-century psyche to trace the fantasy genre as it was utilised by texts, and integrated with other genres across the century for specific cultural and personal reasons. What emerges is a model of fantasy that steadily builds in popularity and social function as the century passes, appearing to a stronger degree in more and more texts, and rising concurrently with the complex matrix

¹⁴ In her 1984 study *Fantasy and Mimesis: Responses to Reality in Western Literature*, Hume argues that many of the definitions of fantasy offered by previous critics suffer from exclusivity and are "inadequate to the full range of non-realistic phenomena in literature" (20). According to Hume, "we are curiously blind" to the presence of fantasy in "all but a small part of western literature...because our traditional approaches to literature are based on mimetic assumptions" originating in the tradition of Plato and Aristotle (3). Such criticism is particularly evident in early scholars such as Tolkien and those who follow him.

¹⁵ See discussion below.

of social and cultural investigation that was being carried out into the hyperspaces of the supernatural and dreams.

While the notion of fantasy as a genre that may be utilised by texts for varying reasons, and to varying effects is a helpful one, just what constitutes the presence of this genre has been a point of even greater contention among critics. Indeed, from the same moment that it was critically perceived as a genre, it was also named a genre impossible to define. In 1927, E. M. Forster identified fantasy as an aspect of the novel in his classic essay 'Fantasy,' in which he noted the tendency of the genre to appear 'like a bar of light, that is intimately connected' with definable elements such as character and time 'at one place and patiently illumines all the problems, and at another place shoots over and through them as if they did not exist' (74). Forster detected in the fantasy genre an important, yet unnameable, quality that kept it from being able to be pinned down accurately in critical terms. This view was shared by Tolkien, who wrote that 'Faërie cannot be caught in a net of words; for it is one of its qualities to be indescribable, though not imperceptible. It has many ingredients, but analysis will not necessarily discover the secret of the whole' (114). Tolkien however offers one condition of fantasy: that its magic, or supernatural elements, 'must be taken seriously, neither laughed at nor explained away' (114). In this way, he does not believe that narratives such as Carroll's dream-story, which contain a framing device that explain the fantasy world as illusion, can be called fantasy. Yet, it cannot be denied that such stories do indeed utilise the power of fantasy within them, and Carroll's text was certainly a formative one in the course of the nineteenth-century relationship between fantasy and the hyperspaces of dreams and the supernatural, as will be explored below in Chapter Six. This influence is especially so when its framing device of the dream is considered in light of its context of spiritualism that posited the idea of dreams as portals into the extended spaces of invisible reality. Such uses of fantasy presented a different view of reality that challenged and broadened traditional ideas and allowed the fantastic elements of the text to remain as tantalising questions, rather than illusions that could be swept away by the framing device of the dream. In this way, contrary to the claims of Tolkien, literary dreams, particularly where they operate as portals through which to access a higher, or 'beyond', supernatural space, do not need to be reduced to a 'rational' explanation for 'irrational' visions. Rather, especially in the post-Romantic literary investigation of the supernatural, dreams can, and often should, be seen not through the eyes of the twentieth century but, in the context of Victorian supernaturalism, as a way to access and experience quite legitimate supernatural experiences.

It is this possibility of the real, or of the fantastic being real, that seems key to a definition of fantasy, and is also paramount to the nineteenth-century investigation of supernatural and mental hyperspace. It is the possibility – the very question – of the reality of hyperspace that allowed such investigation to occur and to grip the century with such fervour as it did. Many critics also agree that the textual presence of the fantasy genre may be defined by this possibility of the ‘unreal’. For Tolkien, the power of language is paramount in the human consideration of its world: it creates Secondary Worlds that the ‘mind can enter’ and which are believed while one is ‘inside’ (132). However, ‘the moment disbelief arises, the spell is broken; the magic, or rather art, has failed’ and the reader is ‘out in the Primary world again, looking at the little abortive secondary world from outside’ (132). This is also the case for Todorov, for whom the fantastic in literature is a point of hesitation in the implied reader upon confrontation with apparently supernatural events: the fantastic ‘confronts us with a dilemma: to believe or not to believe?’ and exists only as long as this hesitation remains (83). As soon as these events are revealed (usually at the end of a text) to have either definite natural or definite supernatural causes, hesitation ends and the fantastic then becomes either the genre of the Uncanny or the Marvellous respectively. The fantastic exists then, as ‘a frontier between two adjacent realms’: the genres of the Uncanny and the Marvellous (Todorov 44). It is a permanently liminal state, which cannot be returned to once it has been explained as either uncanny or marvellous (42). Further, ‘by the hesitation it engenders, the fantastic questions precisely the existence of an irreducible opposition between the real and unreal’ (167). Importantly, the marvellous achieves this impossible union, proposing that the reader believe without really believing’ (83). In this sense, Todorov’s ‘Marvellous’ seems to correspond with the term ‘Fantasy’ as we have been using it, and importantly sets up a distinction between the ‘fantastic’, as an ambiguous intrusion of strange events into ‘real life’, and ‘Fantasy’, where these strange events are explained as supernatural in origin. It is this very transition from the fantastic intrusion into otherwise realist novels (where the supernatural remains a possibility until it becomes uncanny), to novels that celebrate the supernatural as real (and thus exhibit qualities of the fantasy genre) that will be investigated in the following chapters.

A NEW APPROACH TO THE EVOLUTION OF MODERN FANTASY:
THE CRITICAL NEXUS OF SPACE, DREAMS, & THE SUPERNATURAL

As a multi-faceted concept involving many areas across the breadth of the nineteenth century, this thesis is indebted to several indispensable studies that each constitute useful pathways into the diverse and fascinating psyches of the nineteenth century. Ford's *Coleridge on Dreaming*, Richardson's *British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind*, and Thomas's *Dreams of Authority* are unparalleled in their insightful and detailed investigations into the state of dreams and psychology at the beginning and end of the nineteenth century.¹⁶ Similarly, Janet Oppenheim's *The Other World* is invaluable as one of the first detailed enquiries into spiritualism that treats the subject as a serious concern of the Victorian age,¹⁷ while Bown, Burdett and Thurschwell's *The Victorian Supernatural* follows as a richly diverse collection of investigations into the various faces of the Victorian supernatural. Likewise, the works of Michael Gamer and E. J. Clery are indispensable for their detailed and comprehensive insights into the Gothic and the public fascination with the supernatural in the last half of the eighteenth century. On the subject of fantasy literature, Stephen Prickett's *Victorian Fantasy* is one of the first and the most comprehensive of examinations into the character and behaviour of the genre during this time, and an analysis of many of the most seminal fantasy novels of this period, while the close attention to Victorian fantasy writers in the many works of Colin Manlove have proved equally useful. Similarly, Jason Marc Harris's *Folklore and the Fantastic in Nineteenth Century British Fiction* is unique in its detailed and insightful examination of the importance of folklore in the development of the Victorian literary fantastic, and provides a detailed cultural view of the effect of folklore in Victorian culture.¹⁸

While these indispensable studies treat the various strands of my argument, no work has yet been published that explores the peculiarly spatial language used to describe the supernatural

¹⁶ Ford's and Richardson's texts in particular, by examining Coleridge's dream-writings as part of a larger cultural debate on dreaming, deviate from previous scholarship that tended to focus on Coleridge's dream-writing only in relation to his opium usage. See for example, Abrams's *The Milk of Paradise: The Effect of Opium Visions on the works of De Quincey, Crabbe, Francis Thompson and Coleridge*, Schneider's *Coleridge, Opium and 'Khubla Khan'*, and Hayter's *Opium and the Romantic Imagination*. Exceptions to these approaches are Miall's insightful study, 'The Meaning of Dreams: Coleridge's Ambivalence', and Roberts's 'Exorcising the Malay: Dreams and the Unconscious in Coleridge and De Quincey'.

¹⁷ Oppenheim states that Brandon's 1983 study *The Spiritualists: The Passion for the Occult in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* is 'a survey that is largely concerned to reveal the degree of fraud and deceit underlying "spiritualist" phenomena' (400).

¹⁸ See also Silver's *Strange and Secret Peoples*, and Purkiss's *Troublesome Things*, both of which constitute culturally detailed and remarkably perceptive accounts of the popular phenomenon of fairies in the nineteenth century, and their important relationship with folklore and the growing spiritualism of the time.

and dreams during the nineteenth century, nor its relationship to the development of the literary fantasy genre. Related to this omission is the fact that little research has been done into the perception and imagination of hyperspace as it was conceived across the multileveled strata of nineteenth-century society, not only after the development of the mathematical theories of hyperspace, but also previously, in the Romantic imaginings of dream-space, mind-space and the folkloric spaces of the supernatural. Margaret Wertheim's *The Pearly Gates of Cyberspace* and Clifford A. Pickover's *Surfing Through Hyperspace* are indispensable in their illustration of the scientific development of hyperspace theory, but their treatments do not discuss the reception of hyperspace by the wider Victorian public, nor its effects on other philosophical debates of the time. Indeed, though many critics use spatial metaphors in their discussion of the nineteenth century, none has yet identified a distinct concern with space, or more particularly, a desire to know and master various conceptions of higher dimensions, as part of nineteenth-century British society. This thesis therefore aims to fill the gaps left by these studies, and to explore the fruitful nexus that exists between dreams, the supernatural and literature in the nineteenth century: a combination generated by discursive Victorian interactions with the mysterious borders of hyperspace.

This thesis aims to contribute to and develop the rich seams of inquiry opened up by the critical literature mentioned above. Specifically, this study will take the investigation further into the nineteenth century, and illuminate the connections between dreams, the supernatural, hyperspace and fantasy literature that were such an important part of nineteenth-century culture. In its location of the evolution of fantasy within a complex dialectic of investigation into the nature of space and reality, this thesis constitutes a new approach to previously examined material. Rather than treating dreams, the supernatural and fantasy literature as separate, though tenuously linked phenomena, this thesis seeks to illuminate the connections among these elements as they participated in a century-long investigation into the nature and reality of hyperspace. In doing so, it makes a contribution to our knowledge of the era and its artistic and conceptual motivations. Firstly, and perhaps most importantly, this thesis challenges the notion of Victorians as stoically materialist, and recasts what has hitherto been considered the dark underside of Victorian repression as instead a central, dominating and public expression of their deeply inquisitive and self-reflexive minds. It proposes that the Victorian obsession with fairies and ghosts was not a whimsical or frivolous response to the rigid materialism of the day, but rather was an integral part of a wider, and ultimately more influential and meaningful inquiry into the very fabric of life and the limits of human perception. Through the network of letters, journals, periodicals, scientific pamphlets,

religious tracts, textbooks and creative literature that it examines, this thesis argues that this search for knowledge – this drive to push back the boundaries of the known into the spaces beyond – was a desire and a drive at the very heart of the Victorian era, and one that has largely gone unaddressed by critical literature in such specific terms. The spatial aspect to the drive for knowledge is one that allows a specific pathway into this unique Victorian phenomenon and allows us to see how it worked across the broad matrix of society and culture throughout the century. To examine its profound literary impact, namely its influence in the evolution of the fantasy genre during this time, illustrates the expansive way in which it was worked and developed upon over the course of the century.

Similarly, this line of inquiry is significant because it sheds light on the traditional critical juxtaposition of science and literature, which has recently been opposed by such writers as Richardson and Cosslett. By focusing on scientific and creative texts that seek to engage with spatial realities of the mind and the supernatural, this thesis illuminates an important cross-disciplinary and multifaceted communication and sharing of ideas between the developing sciences and creative literature. This interdisciplinary cross-fertilisation occurs right from the beginning of the century with the Romantic confluence of the mind and early brain science, and lasts through to the end of the century where the developing sciences of psychology were fed by, and in turn influenced, much of the creative literature of the time. This relationship between the sciences and popular creative literature during the nineteenth century is an important one as it reflects the unique and cross-disciplinary way in which the nineteenth century operated, involving all aspects of society as it sought new pathways into the dark spaces of potential knowledge it sensed all around itself. Thus, in the 1800s, a poet and philosopher like Coleridge could discuss theories of the mind and brain with laboratory scientists, and both men could publish their respective thoughts on these topics (Richardson 7). Similarly, at the opposite end of the century Freud published his psychological theories that, as Frankland has illustrated, ‘are replete with allusions to European literature’ and constitute ‘a “science” which simply cannot be understood or appreciated without reference to its creator’s literary culture’ (2-3). Some even detected this literary-scientific relationship as it was occurring: in his essay of 1877, entitled ‘The Scientific Movement and Literature’, Edward Dowden wrote:

any inquiry at the present day into the relations of modern scientific thought with literature must in great part be guided by hints, signs and presages. The time has not yet come when it may be possible to perceive in complete outline the significance of

science for the imagination and emotions of men, but that the significance is large and deep we cannot doubt. (cited in Cosslett 3)

This thesis aims to illuminate this ‘large and deep’ significance where it occurs in relation to the nineteenth-century pursuit of hyperspace and its expression within the developing fantasy genre.

CHAPTERS

In keeping with the theme of liminality and border crossing, the borders between the different chapters in this thesis are necessarily blurred, overlapping and colliding at the edges. The relationship among dreams, the supernatural and the developing fantasy genre during the nineteenth century was a diverse, flexible and animated one, traversing many different areas of Victorian culture in a kaleidoscopic array of opinions, discoveries, communications and borrowings. As such, it cannot be broken up neatly into clear-cut fragments. Thus, for example, the period between the 1830s and 1850s not only closes the literary output of De Quincey, and hence, also, Chapter Five, but also sees the rise of Dickens as a popular literary figure, and so begins Chapter Six. This overlap in the timeline, however, is essential in illustrating just how interdependent many of the writers and philosophers were during the span of the Nineteenth Century. From Walpole to Morris, writers borrowed and quoted from each other and the growing number of sources surrounding them that detailed theories and beliefs about dreams and the supernatural, shaping them into their own theories, and in turn advancing the development of the literary fantasy genre.

To reflect this cross-fertilising interaction between writers and thinkers, each of the following chapters is focused primarily around the work of a single prolific writer, or group of writers, treated chronologically from the Gothic works of the late eighteenth century, through Coleridge, De Quincey, Shelley, Dickens, and Kingsley, to MacDonald and Morris, who emerge among a wealth of fantasy, fantastic and science fiction writers at the end of the century. However, within each chapter, considerable attention is given to the surrounding scientific, philosophical, popular and personal contexts that were shaping society at the time of the particular author’s writing. Therefore, rather than offering a solely literary criticism through textual analysis alone, these chapters aim to locate the evolution of the fantasy genre

and ideas of hyperspace within the specific cultural history of the nineteenth century through a combined consideration of textual analysis, cultural historicism, and documentary evidence.

Chapters Two and Three trace the rise of the public interest in the supernatural in the final decades of the eighteenth century, and its expression in one of the most prodigious literary forms in history: the Gothic novel. Together they explore the important idea that the Gothic novels, rather than remaining aesthetically interesting but culturally irrelevant fringe topics, were bound up within a much larger Gothic aesthetic that became the medium for expressing an existential questioning of the nature of the universe and reality that was at the heart of late-eighteenth century society. Involving from the outset a vast cross-section of society, spanning literary, political, scientific and popular media, as well as many of the most eminent public figures of the day, this aesthetic set out to explore the liminal experiences of human contact with the supernatural world, and was concerned with one central question: if the supernatural did exist, where was it located, and how did this space interact with and affect that of the everyday world? Significantly, as the public mounted its passionate investigation into the supernatural, which took a surprising number of forms across a vast array of society, it was during this time that the supernatural, and the literature that expressed it, took on a unique quality of ambiguity that allowed it to remain beyond the reach of those who would seek to deny its reality. Much like the hesitation that Todorov assigns to the literary fantastic, this ambiguity remained a permanent feature of the Romantic and Victorian engagement with the supernatural. Importantly, this hesitation, in which the supernatural could neither be proven nor denied, relied on a specific construction of a supernatural space that was ‘beyond’ the reaches of the natural world: the ‘other worlds’ and ‘fairylands’ of folklore. Though it has been little recognised and often overlooked or taken for granted, the Gothic aesthetic, and particularly the Gothic novels written by popular authors such as Walpole and Radcliffe, are primarily concerned with the evocation and exploration of these kind of ‘beyond’ spaces, and particularly the phenomena that occurs at the liminal meeting points – the borderlands – between the natural and supernatural worlds. The rise of interest in the supernatural, and the eighteenth-century attitudes towards it, as well as their unique constructions of supernatural space and its impact on theories of aesthetics, imagination and consciousness are explored in Chapter Two: ‘Gothic Ghosts and Other Worlds: The Rise of Supernatural Space in the Eighteenth Century’. These ideas are continued in Chapter Three, ‘The Gothic Aesthetic: Space and the Supernatural in the Gothic Novels and Beyond’, which expands upon Chapter Two’s exploration of eighteenth-century constructions of supernatural space to examine how these spaces were directly evoked and exploited not only in the popular Gothic novels, but in

what can be seen as a wider ‘Gothic aesthetic’ that encompassed the artistic, political and aesthetic forms beyond them.

However, though the Gothic novels were immensely popular, projecting the supernatural to an unprecedented height of popularity, they were also heavily critically censured, particularly by those writers most associated with the period covering the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries: the Romantic poets. This critical censure however, did not stop those poets from being heavily influenced by the Gothic aesthetic, and it is testament to the appeal of the supernatural during this time that the Romantic writers sought ways to excuse or disguise the Gothic when they used it in their own work. One of the most important writers of this time, and indeed, of the entire nineteenth century, was Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and it is in both his public and private writings that we can observe the birth of the single greatest development in the evolution of both the literary fantasy genre and the increasing interest in the supernatural: the relationship of overlap that Coleridge perceived between the liminal spaces of the supernatural and the similarly liminal spaces of dreams. In this spatial overlap, dreams bore the potential to become vehicles through which the consciousness of the dreamer could access the ‘beyond’ spaces of the supernatural. Rather worryingly for Coleridge however, the liminal spatial quality of dreams, or ‘Morphean Space’ as he called it, also allowed the potential for the supernatural to access the human world, and it is through this notion that Coleridge grappled with the idea of madness and supernatural possession. At the turn of the century, debate raged over whether dreams were supernatural or physical in origin, inspired either by spirits or demonic possession, or initiated in the body as part of the functioning of the brain or the effect of digestion. Where writers believed dreams to be purely physically inspired, it will be seen that supernatural metaphors were still hard to avoid. Coleridge’s pains to describe the nature of Morphean space and its relationship to the supernatural are evident throughout his journals, letters and marginalia, while perhaps his two most influential and lasting poems, ‘The Rime of the Ancient Mariner’ and ‘Christabel’, represent the culmination of his thoughts and anxieties about the liminal space that dreams occupied between the natural and supernatural worlds. These concerns will be explored in Chapter Four, ‘The Supernatural and Morphean Space: S. T. Coleridge’s Romantic-Gothic’.

Chapter Five, entitled ‘At the Limits of the Supernatural: “The Vast” and Dream Space in De Quincey and Shelley’, charts the deep influence that Coleridge and his notion of liminal dream space had upon his immediate contemporaries and the way that Mary Shelley and Thomas De Quincey in particular played an integral part in the transmission and expansion of

these ideas into the growing medium of prose over the last decades in which poetry would dominate the prose form in British literature. While Mary Shelley is often associated with the Gothic and with early examples of the fantastic, De Quincey is not someone normally included in a history of fantasy literature, despite his integral role in the expansion of Coleridge's notions of liminal dream space and its relationship with 'the Vast' and the supernatural. Both intimately involved with and heavily influenced by Coleridge's ideas and poetry, Shelley and De Quincey represent writers of the early nineteenth century who were deeply concerned with the nature of space and the supernatural. Coupled with evidence of their intimate relationship with the scientific, literary and philosophical contexts of their day, their works stand as testament to the continued allure that the supernatural and similar 'beyond' spaces held for the Victorian public. In turn, their works also strongly influenced later writers, and as such, they remain important figures in the development of both literary and scientific explorations of early hyperspace and the supernatural. While Shelley engages closely with the important relationships between madness, dreaming and the supernatural that were being theorised in the early Victorian era, De Quincey utilises the liminal space of the dream to access 'the Vast' and the supernatural spaces of the universe, and so ventures further into Morphean Space than previous writers.

Significantly, in the literature produced during this time, this space was still accessed via the liminal vehicle of the dream, though it was being explored in more and more detail as the presence of the supernatural in mainstream literature increased. Rather than the mysterious and unexplained intrusions of seemingly supernatural phenomena into sublime settings that characterised the Gothic (and which complies with Todorov's distinction of 'the fantastic' as explored above), literature now begins to move toward the marvellous as it enters these dream-worlds whole. It is from this angle that the sixth and final chapter, entitled 'Worlds Beyond Worlds: Dreams, Hyperspace and the Birth of Modern Fantasy' charts one of the most formative and prolific periods in the development of the modern fantasy genre. Beginning with the work of Dickens, which bears both strong influence and chronological overlap with De Quincey, and engages closely with contemporary discourses of dreams, mesmerism, spiritualism and psychology to elevate the supernatural to a new level of popularity in mainstream literature, this chapter charts the rapid evolution from the literary fantastic to modern fantasy via recourse to the emerging hyperspace philosophies across the works of Dickens, Kingsley, Carroll, MacDonald, and Morris, in whose novels appear the earliest examples of modern 'secondary world' fantasy.

In Kingsley's text, while the developing scientific atmosphere of the Victorian era seeks to challenge the reality of the supernatural, the supernatural itself is located within the microscopic fabric of natural life itself, hidden from the view of closed-minded academia by the fact that psychological perception is the key to accessing the supernatural, even if it is paradoxically right under one's nose. In this way, Kingsley's text, along with MacDonald's early exploration of secondary dream-worlds in *Phantastes* (through which he is often considered the father of modern fantasy), and Carroll's iconic Victorian dream-texts, *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass*, form a dialogue with earlier Romantic privileging of altered states of perception in accessing the supernatural, and later accounts of the kind of mind-frame needed to access higher-dimensional space. Importantly, such a contextualisation of these early dream narratives challenges the traditional critical conception of the dream as a literary framing device that discredits the reality of its contained world. By situating such texts within their wider literary, scientific, and philosophical contexts, which involved debates over the nature of imagination, dreams, the supernatural, and reality, this chapter seeks to reframe the dream frame, and resituate it within its important cultural and literary position as a liminal destabiliser of reality within early fantasy literature. In this way, Chapter Six seeks to claim earlier works of dream-fantasy such as *Phantastes* and the *Alice* books as liminal examples of secondary world fantasy, and as clear precursors of the developments that would follow in the later works of MacDonald and Morris.

The very fact of the ambiguity between the status of these supernatural worlds as 'real' or a dream of the protagonist hints at the status of social perceptions of the supernatural. A theoretical, philosophical or delusional topic at best, it still lacked any proof that could elevate it to less sceptical or hopeful conversation, even if those who entertained the idea of the supernatural did so through the language of science. Writing in 1870, William Henry Harrison, editor of 'one of the most successful of all Victorian Spiritualist periodicals, the *Spiritualist*,' wrote that:

Not much observation of the phenomena of Spiritualism is necessary to learn that the manifestations are governed by *physical and mental laws*, though very few of these laws are at present known. Systematic, scientific research applied to Spiritualism would therefore...be sure to give very valuable results, by clearing away much of the mystery overhanging *the borderland between this world and the next*, and by strengthening the conditions which now enable spirits to communicate. (my emphasis. Cited in Noakes 30)

The spatial language in this extract is obvious, indicating Harrison's belief that a borderland existed between this world and the next, wherever that was, and that it was able to be governed by quantifiable laws, though these laws had yet to be understood by human society. Ideas of supernatural hyperspace, while distinctly growing in strength and literary expression, have not yet been bolstered by the mathematical theories of the fourth dimension that were soon to follow.

Yet, as the Victorian era entered its latter half the conception of space as it related to the supernatural and the space of dreams and the mind would undergo a change that would see an extension of the kinds of spatial evolution that fantastic literature had been charting for the past decades, bolstered by the growing public interest in Spiritualism. In 1884, Edwin Abbott published his book *Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions by A Square*, which combined an entertaining social commentary with an illustration of the concept of higher dimensions. Hyperspace, an idea initially circulated in mathematical circles, had entered the popular domain. The decade before this event is considered the moment of explosion in popularity of Victorian spiritualism. The parlour games of table-rapping and séances, the conferences on ghosts and telepathy referred to by scholars of the supernatural such as Bown, Burdett and Thurschwell, refer to this period and the decades that followed until the end of the century. The supernatural had established its firm hold on the Victorian imagination and for many enthusiastic spiritualists it was now backed up by scientific theory. The Society for Psychical Research was formed and claims of ghosts, telepathy and other supernatural phenomena were investigated in the hope of gathering further proof of this higher dimension, while in less convinced circles, debate raged over the validity and possibility of such claims. In the literary world, this combination of hyperspace theory and spiritualism in the public imagination resulted in the development of completely secondary worlds: literary settings that were separate from the primary world of everyday human experience. The first examples of this are found in the later novels of George MacDonald and William Morris, an examination of which closes the final chapter. These novels, in creating secondary worlds that are governed by imaginary supernatural laws, not only explored and expressed the Victorian desire for transcendence and higher dimensions, but also discovered a powerful avenue through which to reflect upon society and offer poignant social commentary. This dual potential for imaginative escape and motivated instruction is particularly evident in the work of committed socialist William Morris. Importantly, the novels of this period reflect many of the concerns of previous decades in the century: they not only include explorations of dreams and mind-spaces but they also demonstrate influences from Romanticism, the Gothic, Pre-Raphaelite

medievalism and folk culture, which suggests the path of evolution that they traced from these earlier sources.

From this time onward, the emergence of theories of hyperspace, and their adoption by the spiritualists as evidence of the supernatural world, dissolves the restraints upon the literary exploration of supernatural space. The framing device of the dream is shed to allow literature's first truly secondary worlds and through them, the birth of true modern fantasy. The scientific light now cast on hyperspace allows a notion of direct access – a license to explore such spaces without a vehicle of transmission into this space. The supernatural gains a level of potential legitimacy through connection with hyperspace and so no longer needs a narrative framing device to aid transition into this world, or the excuse that such framing devices provided (though human transgression into these worlds will continue to be a vastly popular subject). Instead, these hyperspatial secondary worlds are indulged in for their own sake. Through the works of MacDonald and Morris in particular, fantasy is pushed beyond the final limit to fully inhabit these secondary worlds, consolidating the century-wide evolution of the literary form and establishing a popular and literary taste that was reflected in the wider interest in the supernatural and hyperspace that is evidenced in the intense public presence of the spiritualists and the explosion of fantasy and science fiction literature from the 1890s onwards through authors such as H. G. Wells, Dunsany, Nesbitt and Kipling, of whom Prickett writes: 'he was a man haunted by other worlds, and as his art developed he became progressively more skilful in suggesting the intersection of different planes of reality' (*Victorian Fantasy* 200). Wells's *The Time-Traveller* is probably the best known of his explorations of higher dimensions, where the fourth dimension is time. Yet several of his other speculative fictions consider higher spatial dimensions that exhibit all the traits of the hyperspace that was being discussed at the time. In this turbulent time of literary, cultural and scientific growth, fantasy as a genre had been established, and it would continue to grow into the indispensable role it now plays today, where the elastic potential of film, and particularly its CGI effects, has produced a great resurgence in the popularity and cultural relevance of fantasy.¹⁹ Seminal writers such as Tolkien and Lewis, whose works have both enjoyed recent

¹⁹ Fantasy has indeed seen an unparalleled resurgence in the popular cultural mainstream in the beginning of the twenty-first century through both film and literary mediums. Following the success of the *Harry Potter* series, Peter Jackson's recent *Lord of the Rings* films, and similar wizard-themed texts, Stephanie Myer's *Twilight* series initiated a new-found wave of interest in vampires and similar gothic fantasy subjects: an interest that has expanded beyond books and film into multimedia and merchandising avenues. The taste of this interest in fantasy differs distinctly from that of the nineteenth century however in its near complete lack of earnest speculative inquiry into the possibilities of other worlds and their supernatural phenomena. In the twenty-first century, the cultural role of fantasy has been removed from a serious spatial and existential questioning and serves rather the important functions of entertainment and allegorical social commentary.

filmic adaptations, would be greatly influenced by the pioneering work played out at the end of the nineteenth century through writers such as Morris and MacDonald, but while fantasy in the twentieth century rose to new heights of popularity, never again would it occupy quite the same level of cutting-edge speculative enquiry that it held in the great colonisation of hyperspace in the nineteenth century.

GOTHIC GHOSTS & OTHER WORLDS: THE RISE OF SUPERNATURAL SPACE IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Ideas about the supernatural have long held a particular fascination for the human psyche, and have appeared in various forms throughout literature over the ages. What is most surprising however is that it was in the age associated with Locke, Kant and the staunch reason of the enlightenment that interest in this pervasive topic reached an unprecedented level of popularity within the public imagination in England. The most obvious manifestation of this fascination with the supernatural appears in the newly emergent ‘Gothic’ literature that favoured (and revived) the ghosts, spectres and monstrous phenomena of the medieval sources from which it took its name. This literature, which quickly became a powerful commercial force due to its extreme popularity, has come under increasing critical attention since the 1990s, but what is more important and less critically explored is the fact that this literature represented only a small part of what was a much broader investigation into the nature and reality of the supernatural that encompassed theatrical, scientific, philosophical and even political spheres.¹ In order to reflect this broadened scope, our understanding of what constitutes the ‘Gothic’ must also be opened out. This chapter and the next will explore the critical and historical benefit of such generic redefinition in the context of what became in the eighteenth-century, a broad-reaching public interest in the supernatural and its interaction with the natural world. In this model, rather than defining the Gothic as a literary genre or mode with fixed conventions, as has been typical in scholarly contexts, understanding it as a widespread cultural aesthetic allows for a more historically accurate and culturally insightful view of the multifarious ways the supernatural was expressed, investigated and understood in the eighteenth century. This construal of the Gothic also permits a more nuanced understanding of the impact of this genre on philosophical, religious and scientific ideas about self and space, theories of aesthetics, consciousness, the imagination and reading, and artistic forms including the gothic novel and beyond.

Further, while this Gothic aesthetic is beginning to be brought to light by critics such as Clery and Gamer, what has been even less critically explored, though it came under constant debate

¹ See Clery’s insightful treatment of the broad reach of the Gothic during the 1790s, in which she argues, ‘as Gothic fiction moved towards the political, politics moved towards a Gothic aesthetic’ (172).

at the time, is the important question of whether this multifaceted vogue for the supernatural represented merely a fashionable entertainment or a more serious enquiry into the potential reality of the spectral spectacle. The answer to this problem lies in the realisation that both positions must necessarily be true for the supernatural to sustain the kind of enduring power over the public imagination that it held in the late-eighteenth century, and that it would continue to hold over the century to follow as it evolved toward the development of the modern fantasy genre. This power was poised in the hesitation between faith and scepticism that the supernatural occupied in the public imagination, where the supernatural could neither be satisfactorily proved nor entirely disproved, despite the increasing attempts to do so, but always existed in an ambiguous dialectic between the two that kept the ‘impossible’ supernatural in a tantalising state of potential.

While this ambiguous dialectic characterises the reception of the supernatural during the eighteenth century (and establishes the character of its reception by the nineteenth century also), more illuminating and more significant in the history of the fantasy genre is the fact that what maintains this ambiguity and what lies at the very heart of the Gothic exploration of the supernatural is the question of space. For if the supernatural were to exist, one must ask *where* it exists. This spatial imagining of the supernatural is one of the most important and yet also one of the most critically overlooked aspects of the eighteenth-century Gothic phenomenon, and can be understood in three ways. Firstly, the Gothic drew upon the ‘other-world’ traditions of folklore to construct a unique kind of space for the supernatural that existed ‘beyond’ the limits of the everyday world and hence beyond the reach of the writers, scientists, philosophers and sceptics that wished to investigate it. This ‘beyond’ space was believed to intersect with the limits of the physical world during ghostly hauntings and fairy sightings, and begged the perpetual questions that drove eighteenth-century investigation into the supernatural: how was this ‘beyond space’, variously characterised as the ‘spirit realm’, ‘spirit world’, ‘other world’, and ‘beyond the vale’, to be described, accessed and proved? Was the access one-way or could the borders between these worlds be crossed at will? Secondly, the Gothic supernatural was constructed as a space imagined and brought into being during the process of reading or observing the Gothic texts, and in this way, it prefigures the Romantic notions of imagination and perceptions that will be explored in Chapter Four. Thirdly, supernatural space was encountered and understood within another unique space in the public consciousness – a space characterised by its separation from and destabilisation of the normal binary divisions and laws of every day life – that can best be understood by the metaphor, which was applied to the supernatural by critics at the time, of

the theatre. Taken together, these elements of the spatial supernatural reveal a complex consideration of what might be considered an early precursor of both hyperspace and virtual reality and can be seen as the starting point of the supernatural-spatial progression that would eventually lead to the establishment of the modern fantasy genre.²

Perhaps most importantly, situating the beginning of the literary fantasy evolution within the centre of what was to become a widespread cultural and literary revolution challenges the notion that fantasy or fantastic elements – the supernatural – in literature developed quietly on the fringes of more ‘serious’ literature. Indeed, from the outset, not only was it borne up at the centre of wide-ranging public debates on the nature of reading, philosophy, existence and morality that involved the most eminent thinkers, writers and public figures of the day, but it also played a crucial role in dramatic contemporary changes in literary form and readership as new reading classes developed and literary interest moved from poetry to the rising novels and periodicals of the late eighteenth century. It is from a context of deep social reform laced with a curiosity and a desire to explore unknowns and expose hoax that literary fantasy in the nineteenth century is born, and as the century grows, the reception of this literature retains the dual sense of legitimate scientific inquiry and the ignorant encouragement of vulgar superstitions that it was associated with during the debates of the eighteenth century.

GOTHIC ROMANCE & THE SUPERNATURAL

Of the various eighteenth-century expressions of interest in the supernatural, perhaps none was as widespread or as (in)famous as the literature that sought to explore the effects of the supernatural upon the natural world: the literary phenomenon now referred to as the ‘Gothic’ novel. While many associate the eighteenth century with the enlightenment values of reason and mimesis, the reach of the Gothic literature of the supernatural cannot be overestimated. Various referred to as ““modern Romance”; “the *terrible* school”; “the Terrorist System of Novel Writing”; “Terrorist Novel Writing” or “the *hobgoblin-romance*” (Clery 148), this new kind of literature ‘exploded in the 1790s...throughout the British Isles, on the continent of Europe, and briefly in the new United States, particularly for a female readership, so much

² See Saler’s recent work on the notion of virtual reality and its precursors in fantastic literature in his book ‘As If: Modern Enchantment and the Literary PreHistory of Virtual Reality’. While Saler begins his enquiry much later in the nineteenth century, his research is important in recognising these forms of hyperspatial imagination as precursors of today’s much more familiar concept of virtual reality: a fact that Saler argues contributes to the enduring power of fantastic literature and its sense of community among fans.

so that it remained a popular, if controversial, literary mode throughout...the early 1830s' (Hogle 1). While some critics argue that not all works considered Gothic necessarily contain the supernatural (Carter 29), during the eighteenth century, there was a general consensus that the defining element of this new kind of literature, in strict contrast to the mimetic reason of the early-eighteenth-century novels that preceded it, was the marvellous.³ This supernatural foundation is highlighted by a writer for *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, who wrote in 1818 of 'the end of last century, when...there sprung up an immense number of romances and fictions, the interest of which was founded almost entirely upon apparitions and the mysteries of haunted castles, or prophecies, dreams, and presentments [*sic*].'⁴ Similarly, a reviewer for *Monthly Magazine* in November 1797 defined 'the *hobgoblin-romance*' as 'those terrible stories with which the public have lately been entertained, where we have sorcerers, and magical delusions, and skeletons, and apparitions of all sorts and sizes, and midnight voices, and *petits talons*, and echoing footsteps, and haunted castles.'⁵ Whether it was 'ghosts and hobgoblins' in the words of poet S. T. Coleridge,⁶ or 'ghosts, murderers, magicians, faries [*sic*], devils, all those things invented to murder sleep',⁷ the literature which explored the supernatural was so numerous that it seemed, as the satirical poem 'The Age' pointed out as late as 1810, that castle ruins haunted by grinning ghosts were 'a rule of late / From which none dare to deviate'.⁸ Indeed, as another reviewer for *Monthly Magazine* highlights, the literary 'revolution' mounted by the Gothic novels and their representation of the supernatural had acquired an ironically formulaic approach:

If, by this revolution, we have attained the art of frightening young people, and reviving the age of ghosts, hobgoblins, and spirits, we have, at the same time, simplified genius, and shown by what easy process a writer may attain great celebrity in circulating libraries, boarding schools, and watering places. What has he to do but build a castle in the air, and furnish it with dead bodies and departed spirits, and he obtains the character of a man of a most "wonderful imagination, rich in imagery, and who has the wonderful talent of conducting his reader in a cold sweat through five or six volumes".⁹

³ The definition of 'Gothic' remains a contentious point among critics. Some critics still insist that Gothic fiction may be defined by its 'defining sense of the supernatural or the marvellous' (Norton 1). See the discussion of 'Gothic' as a genre below.

⁴ 'Some Remarks on the Use of the Preternatural in Works of Fiction', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 3 (18) (September 1818): 648-50.

⁵ 'On the Titles of Modern Novels' *Monthly Magazine*, 4 (November 1797): 347-8. Signed 'E.'

⁶ 'Lewis's Romance of the Monk', *Critical Review*, 19 (February 1797): 194-8, p. 198.

⁷ Rev. F. Prevost and F. Blangdon (eds), *Flowers of Literature; for 1801 & 1802* (London: B. Crosby, 1803), n.p.n.

⁸ *The Age; A Poem*. London: Vernor, Hood, and Sharpe, 1810. 201-9.

⁹ 'Letter to the Editor', *Monthly Magazine*, 4, 21 (August 1797): 102-4, p. 102.

Yet, however formulaic the Gothic's use of the supernatural may have become, the writer's choice of the word 'revolution' to describe the trajectory of this new literature of the supernatural across the public imagination is not an unjust description. As Clery points out, 'the now all-too-familiar repertoire of spectres, sorcerers, demons and vampires was not from the first unproblematically available as a resource for writers of fiction' (1). Rather, 'works like *The Castle of Otranto*, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *The Monk*, today identified and dealt with by literary critics as early examples of the Gothic novel, as if that label were already secured in place at their time of writing' must be seen instead 'as breakthroughs in the difficult overcoming of barriers to the fictional use of the marvellous (1).¹⁰ This breakthrough is an important one in both the history of literature and the history of the broader public attitudes toward the supernatural, for while it is clear that the inclusion of supernatural elements separates the Gothic novels from their earlier mimetic counterparts, it is the specific way in which the Gothic novels present the supernatural that allow them to reach the staggering heights of popularity and the longevity of literary and cultural influence that they did, and also constitutes a clear separation from earlier literary uses of the supernatural. For though the supernatural has appeared in literature for thousands of years, what constitutes this 'breakthrough' in the eighteenth century and separates the eighteenth-century Gothic from its ancient and medieval predecessors is its unique combination of two previously polarised elements: fantasy and mimesis.

According to Horace Walpole in his preface to the second edition of *The Castle of Otranto*, which is generally considered to be the pioneering example of eighteenth-century Gothic fiction, in ancient and medieval literature of the supernatural 'all was imagination and improbability' and 'the actions, sentiments, conversations, of the heroes and heroines of ancient days were as unnatural as the machines employed to put them in motion' (43). Whereas previous literature that used supernatural elements often did so in an allegorical,

¹⁰ It is important to note that the thematic reliance upon the supernatural was not strictly the sole innovation of Gothic fiction. As Punter and Byron point out, the earlier 'Graveyard' school of poetry should be considered an important early precursor of Gothic fiction in its thematic implication of the supernatural in the form of death and the afterlife. According to these critics, the emergence of the 'Graveyard' school of poetry was not only 'sudden and dramatic' but also 'radically different from anything Pope advocated' and though they did not contain specifically supernatural elements, 'what these poems focus on, in sharp contradistinction to Pope's, is the severe limitations of human pretensions to rational understanding of the purposes and workings of the cosmos' (10). The message of these poems is that truth and wisdom may be accessed via the path of intense feeling rather than logic or reason, and one can only 'learn the secrets of life...from prolonged and absorbed meditation on its extreme limit: death' (11) Importantly, it is in this that 'we see, among other things, a harbinger of the thrill of entering forbidden, thanatic realms which would later become the province of the Gothic novel' (11). Though an important precursor of Gothic fiction however, the Graveyard school of poetry lacked the public fervour that would surround the Gothic novels and their more solidly realised supernatural elements and launch them onto the trajectory that would ultimately lead to the evolution of the modern fantasy genre.

mythological or poetic fashion, the innovation of eighteenth-century Gothic was to take the supernatural elements that were ‘considered the distinguishing mark’ of the medieval texts that they drew upon (Carter 5),¹¹ and combine them with the close mimetic prose style of the dominant form of novel-writing in the eighteenth century – the ‘tyranny of the literally real’ (Stockwell 7) – that was exemplified by enlightenment writers such as Fielding, Richardson and De Foe. The novelty of this combination was expressed from the start: in his second preface Walpole described his self-conscious ‘attempt to blend the two kinds of romance, the ancient and the modern’ in *Otranto* as ‘new route’ in fiction (43-4) and ‘a new species of romance’ (48). What resulted was an exploration of marvellous events from the psychologically realistic perspective of human perception afforded by the novel’s detailed character depiction and ability to explore events in physical and psychological detail. With an emphasis on perception, Gothic novels allowed a personal identification with the protagonist that facilitated a greater ability to imagine oneself at the frontier of the supernatural – to be drawn ever closer to the world of the supernatural in which the characters were engaged. In other words, rather than poetic devices, metaphors or medieval tropes, the supernatural becomes, in the eighteenth-century Gothic novel, a subject to be considered as realistically as the actions, motivations and perceptions of the novel’s characters. In a move that would have wide-reaching and lasting consequences not only upon the direction of literature and literary taste, but also upon the wider public attitude toward the supernatural itself, novels have expanded from the rational mimesis of Fielding and Richardson to include the supernatural among their list of phenomena presented as ‘literally real’.

While Walpole’s 1764 novel *The Castle of Otranto* is generally considered the first Gothic novel, it was initially marketed and publicly accepted as a genuine relic of the Middle Ages, in which its ‘air of the *miraculous*’ was to be ‘excused’ by an enlightenment audience accustomed to a diet of mimetic fiction and poetry because it stood as a mark of the barbarous times in which the work was purportedly produced (40). It was not until the 1790s, and largely through the work of Ann Radcliffe, that Gothic fiction (and its aesthetic justification) evolved to a level of psychological realism that allowed the supernatural to be considered as a potential reality within the framework of the novel. As Howard suggests, while early Gothic writers such as Walpole, Clara Reeve and Sophia Lee waged an uphill battle for acceptance of their literature, ‘it took Ann Radcliffe’s fluid narrative style, her more realistic fictional world, and’ her characters’ ‘interiority to establish a gothic mood of pervasive fear into which readers were drawn’ (xi): in her most successful work, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794),

¹¹ See below.

‘Radcliffe, with her third-person omniscient narration, breaks new ground by frequently allowing us to know what Emily sees and feels, by giving her presentiments which blur the boundaries between illusion and reality, thus keeping her readers guessing’ (ix). Over the span of thirty years, the supernatural had moved from the borders of aesthetic tolerance to the foreground of psychological experience – a frighteningly real phenomenon with prodigious effects upon not only the reader’s experience, but on the public reception of Gothic literature itself. The result was a revolutionary commercial, aesthetic, philosophical and intellectual phenomenon.

By the 1790s, the Gothic novels reached unprecedented levels of popularity in Britain. As Clery states, when authors such as Walpole and Radcliffe ‘experimentally introduced phantoms and phantasy into the novel form’ they made it possible ‘for supernaturalism in the form of commodified fictions to collide with public cultural and economic hierarchies of value with disruptive force’ (154): ‘these were conditions of open confrontation; but the moment was almost instantly overtaken by a success which was also the compounding of a new orthodoxy in which calculation figured pre-eminently’ (154-5). Gothic novels began to appear ‘at the rate of more than a dozen every year from 1794 through 1797, and increased to nearly two dozen per year for 1798 through 1810’ to become by far ‘the most popular literature in Britain’ (Norton viii, vii).¹² This popularity is indicated by Rimelli, who wrote in 1802, ‘the press teems with *Midnight Bells*, *Black Castles*, and *Haunted Towers*, *Mysterious Monks*, &c. &c. with a long train of ghosts, phantoms, &c.’¹³ In August 1794, the *British Critic* referred to ‘the present daily increasing rage for novels addressed to the strong passions of wonder and terror’, while some sixteen years later, in May 1810, Sir Walter Scott would claim that the literature of the supernatural ‘perhaps has more attraction for the public at large than any other species of literary composition’.¹⁴ As Norton states, ‘this was the earliest popular literature, appealing to all classes of readers rather than just to an elite literary culture, and producing the first “bestseller” in Ann Radcliffe’s *The Mysteries of Udolpho*’ (vii).¹⁵

¹² For an insightful and detailed examination of the rise of Gothic fiction to popularity during the 1790s, see also Miles’s ‘The 1790s: the effulgence of Gothic.’

¹³ ‘Novels and Romances’, *Monthly Mirror*, 14 (August 1802): 81-2, p. 81.

¹⁴ ‘Review of Maturin’s *Fatal Revenge; or, the Family of Montorio*’, *Quarterly Review*, 3 (May 1810): 339-47.

¹⁵ ‘By 1823 the *Gentleman’s Magazine* could claim that Radcliffe’s romances had been translated into every “European tongue” to the “honour of the country”, and Sir Walter Scott in 1824 could still recall the excitement and captivation of whole families as Radcliffe’s volumes “flew, and were sometimes torn, from hand to hand” (Howard viii). Radcliffe would become known as the great foundress of Gothic fiction and her work ‘inspired a host of imitators whose Gothic romances dominated circulating libraries for the next decade,’ while even to this day, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* has remained continuously in print since its initial publication in 1794 (Howard xxiv, xxxvii).

This immense popularity was inextricably bound up in both the ‘rapid expansion of the reading public,’ and the rise of the commercial printing and distribution trade: in response to the mounting success of Gothic novels, more efficient methods of production were invented, which, in turn, allowed the growing market to be flooded with more of the kind of supernatural fictions that readers demanded.¹⁶ Indeed, ‘the vogue for supernatural fictions, simply because it was so plainly a response to an overwhelming demand, became a symbol for the general and ongoing commodification of literature’ (Clery 61, 138).¹⁷ For the course of the supernatural in literature, this was a crucial step. Where it had once been limited to an age of barbarism or its literary emulation, as was the case with Walpole’s pioneering *Otranto*, the supernatural, purely because it was in such high demand at the hands of the readers, was elevated to a level of legitimacy that only increased its availability to writers working within the Gothic tradition. As Clery argues, ‘these changes encouraged the growth of a demand-led industry which could afford to ignore attempts at moral regulation by the literary establishment. The 1790s represented a dramatic turnaround for novels in general, but above all for those novels which most flagrantly broke critical tenets – the improbable, the marvellous’ (135). Instead, Gothic novels became driven by emerging arguments for the aesthetic, drawn largely from Edmund Burke’s 1757 treatise, *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, in which he considered ‘terror...the ruling principle of the sublime,’ (1.4) and were praised as a medium to excite the imagination: an antidote to the moralizing rationality of enlightenment thinking and against the lethargy caused by overexposure to ‘stale unaffecting familiarity’ (1.1).

This critical justification of the supernatural amounted to both an implied attack on the mimetic novels of writers such as Fielding and Richardson, and, conversely, a celebration of the expanding powers of the supernatural or marvellous upon the mind of the reader. Such approaches to the benefits of reading in general had been put about earlier by writers such as Richard Steele, who, in his periodical paper, the *Tatler*, in 1710, wrote, ‘Reading is to the Mind, what Exercise is to the Body.’ Yet it wasn’t until Walpole’s ‘new species’ of fiction, brought about with *Otranto*, that arguments concerning the effects of the supernatural upon what had, in the early-eighteenth century, been considered the moral and didactic function of

¹⁶ Benedict examines the commercial printing and publishing context of literature and literacy in the late-eighteenth century in detail, while Clery traces the effect of this commercial context upon Gothic fictions.

¹⁷ Clery elucidates the chiasmic relationship between Gothic fiction and the commercial book trade further, arguing that ‘if eighteenth-century Britain saw the growing commercialisation of spirits, it also saw a spiritualisation of commerce; a fundamental chiasmus. While ghost stories were being assimilated by a rationalised market system of publishing in the second half of the eighteenth century, the language of supernaturalism was increasingly employed to justify and universalise the characteristics of market capitalism’ (7).

reading began to surface. In his 1765 preface to *Otranto*, Walpole directly challenged what he saw as the over-prescribing, limiting moralizing and rationalizing of novelists such as Samuel Richardson, claiming that 'Nature has cramped imagination' and that 'the great sources of fancy have been dammed up, by a strict adherence to common life' (43). Appealing to Burke's theories of the terror-induced sublime, he prescribed a healthy dose of the supernatural, couched in the distancing framework of a medieval narrative. For Walpole, 'terror' was 'the author's principle engine' and by the fictional presentation of the supernatural, he aimed to elevate the reader's mind from its state of 'languishing' in the overly familiar (40).

The same approach was taken in 1773 by Anna Letitia Aikin (later Barbauld), whose essay 'On Romances' argued:

productions which are thus calculated to please the imagination, and interest the heart...teach us to think, by inuring us to feel: they ventilate the mind by sudden gusts of passion; and prevent the stagnation of thought, by a fresh infusion of dissimilar ideas. (23)

Likewise, her essay "On the Pleasure Derived from Objects of Terror", published in the same collection, argues that:

A strange and unexpected event awakens the mind, and keeps it on the stretch; and where the agency of invisible beings is introduced, of 'forms unseen, and mightier far than we', our imagination...rejoices in the expansion of its powers. Passion and fancy co-operating elevate the soul to its highest pitch; and the pain of terror is lost in amazement. (60)

Such celebrations of the aesthetic value of the supernatural in literature continued throughout the 1790s and into the nineteenth century. As late as 1826, Ann Radcliffe appealed to the authority of Burke, as well as the acknowledged sources of the sublime in Shakespeare and Milton, to argue that terror is a 'very high' 'source of the sublime' and as such 'expands the soul, and awakens the faculties to a higher degree of life'.¹⁸ The celebration of the literary supernatural, which reached its apogee in the 1790s, represents a shift in the marketing and reception of Gothic from historical classifier to aesthetic necessity, and 'marks the point at which the "medieval", the primitive, the wild, became invested with positive value in and for itself and came to be seen as representing virtues and qualities that the "modern" world needed': a change that Punter and Byron describe as 'one of huge dimensions which affected

¹⁸ 'On the Supernatural in Poetry. By the Late Mrs. Radcliffe' *New Monthly Magazine* (1826): 145-52.

whole areas of architectural, artistic and literary culture in Britain and also in some parts of mainland Europe' (Punter and Byron 8).¹⁹ Likewise, Clery asserts that this 'valorisation of the supernatural as a source of aesthetic pleasure, the awakening of a sensibility detached, not only from truth, but also from probability is the sign of an autonomous sphere of art in the process of formation' (35), a development that would have obvious effects upon the progress not only of the supernatural throughout the following years, but also the progress of literature as an art form itself. Indeed, as the Gothic novels of the supernatural 'effected a revolution in popular taste' (Norton vii), literature became 'the agent of culture in the English-speaking world' (Benedict 19).

However, this enthusiastic reception of Gothic literature represents only one side of this Janus-faced phenomenon, for despite the immense popularity of the Gothic novels, the genre remained almost uniformly censured within critical reviews. Indeed, the same claim that Gothic fiction excited the imagination was also one of the strongest critical arguments against it. A common charge was that the Gothic novelists, disparagingly referred to as 'goblin-mongers,' 'wholesale dealers in the frightful' (Prevost and Blandon 393), and as 'fickle pensioners of Morpheus' train',²⁰ indulged 'a second childishness of taste'²¹ and were 'to be deprecated for teaching youth to mistake loose sentiments for liberal opinions, heedless profligacy for benevolent disposition, and impiety for strength of mind' (Prevost and Blandon n.p.n.). As Rimelli explains in the *Monthly Mirror* in 1802, 'it is urged by the "ante-novelists" that romances and novels serve only to estrange the minds of youth (especially females) from their own affairs, and transmit them to those of which they read'.²² The severity of such critical vilification is apparent in the fact that proponents of this view commonly deemed it necessary 'for the welfare of the present generation, if those ridiculous fabrications, of weak minds and often depraved hearts, which constitute the enchantment of circulating libraries, could be entirely annihilated' (Prevost and Blandon n.p.n.).

While these accounts reflect 'the repeated charge that such literature appeals to and is created by "the distempered imagination"' (Norton 279), another and perhaps more serious concern for late-eighteenth-century critics of the Gothic was that the general taste for Gothic fictions

¹⁹ For more detail see Punter and Byron 7-12.

²⁰ Academicus, 'On the Absurdities of the Modern Stage' *Monthly Mirror* 10 (September 1800): 180-2.

²¹ 'On the Titles of Modern Novels' *Monthly Magazine* 4 (November 1797): 347-8. Signed 'E.'

²² Rimelli, 'Novels and Romances' *Monthly Mirror* 14 (August 1802): 81-2, p. 81. An excellent example of this kind of reductive moralising is given by a doctor in *Monthly Review*, 1:47 (July 1773), who argues that 'a young girl, instead of running about and playing, *reads*, perpetually reads, and at twenty becomes full of vapours, instead of becoming qualified for the duties of a good wife, or nurse...I have known persons of both sexes, whose constitutions would have been robust, weakened by the too strong impressions of impassioned writings'.

represented a mounting belief in, or at least a receptivity towards, the supernatural itself. One of the main criticisms levelled against the readers of the Gothic was that they were blinded by credulity – a superstitious nature akin to that usually attributed to the less educated classes or the ‘barbarous superstitions of Gothic devilism!’²³ exhibited in ages past – and that their indulgence of the Gothic ‘literature of terror’ was a fan to the flames of a growing superstitious culture at the centre of what was supposed to be an enlightened Age of Reason. In short, the criticism against the Gothic novels was bound to a general scepticism towards the supernatural itself, and a belief therefore that the supernaturally-themed Gothic novels both encouraged ‘superstition in the ignorant’ (Clery 22) and idly gratified the ‘distempered imagination’ through consideration of unreal phenomena and thus indulged in what was seen as an unhealthy over-excitement of the senses at the expense of moral and rational capabilities.

This fear is reflected in the critical double-take that occurred between the first and second editions of Walpole’s *Otranto*, where the supernatural fiction was widely celebrated when it was thought to be a true medieval relic, and heavily censured when the hoax of its origin was made plain and it turned out to have been written instead by an enlightenment contemporary. As Clery explains, the supernatural is accepted and even enjoyed in medieval literature as being ‘true to history’ – a historical example of such ‘barbaric’ times when the reality of the supernatural was universally accepted (54). However, when the supernatural occurs in modern fiction, the result is a regression to the kind of superstitious thinking that, to an enlightenment sceptic, ought to be left in the dark ages. Indeed, the harshest critical reviews of the Gothic take pains to emphasise the ‘exploded superstitions’ and ‘barbarous nature’ of the supernatural phenomena encountered in Gothic fiction in what appears to be a general bid, despite the overwhelming popularity of the genre, to preach the contrary – that no respectable eighteenth-century reader would seriously entertain such an outdated notion as the supernatural. It is in light of this general scepticism toward the supernatural and disdain for its appearance in literature that Walpole suggests, upon first introducing the supernatural into the novel form as a pseudo-medieval relic, that his ‘work can only be laid before the public at present as a matter of entertainment’ but that ‘even as such, some apology for it is necessary’ (40). As Clery suggests, where the general eighteenth-century critical approach to Gothic fiction is concerned, ‘*Incredulus odi*, to disbelieve is to dislike, might be taken as the motto of enlightenment faced with the spectacle of superstition’ (2).

²³ This description comes from a review of Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* in the *Monthly Review*, 1765 (cited in Clery 53).

This heavy critical censure of the Gothic despite its overwhelming popularity, and in particular its reliance on a derisive attitude toward the supernatural, has been passed down through the proceeding centuries as the dominant, or perhaps most fashionable, form of criticism on the literature of the supernatural. By adopting processes of literary canonisation that were largely formed during the Romantic period (the period which witnessed both the largest production and heaviest critical vilification of Gothic texts), twentieth-century criticism has only served to strengthen a general approach to the eighteenth-century Gothic that sees it as the illegitimate sibling of more serious literature – a popular, vulgar and often trivial genre that was entertained by the masses merely as idle fiction while its supernatural elements were not in the least taken to reflect any kind of reality. Indeed, these critics seem to have taken at face value Walpole's apologetic claim that the supernatural might only be offered in fiction as 'entertainment'. While its supernatural elements were enjoyed, they were not deemed reflective of any reality beyond the text. Yet this view, however, is an example of historical over-glossing that has unfortunately led to a reductive and generally skewed view of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, particularly where their engagement with notions of the supernatural are concerned. The result is a history of literary criticism that sees much of the Gothic fictions produced in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries either ignored or greatly reduced in significance, at least until the relatively recent attempts of critics in the last decades of the twentieth century to wrest the Gothic novels from their reputation as a lesser art form.²⁴

Yet, while the Gothic has received increasing attention in recent criticism, much of this criticism manages to likewise circumvent the question of whether the Gothic's use of the supernatural mounted a serious investigation into what was believed to be at least potentially real supernatural phenomena. Perhaps taking for granted the reductive views that have amassed over the last centuries, which believed that the eighteenth-century readers considered the supernatural as mere entertainment, much modern criticism has instead involved interpreting the Gothic's supernatural elements as symbols for wider political and cultural concerns. According to Hogle:

the late twentieth-century effulgence in teaching and writing about Gothic fictions has been dominated either by psychoanalytic readings of such creations or by Marxist,

²⁴ As Thompson explains, 'until the 1950's, the prevailing critical view of Gothic literature was essentially that of the later nineteenth-century moralists: namely that the Gothic lacked "high seriousness"' (Thompson preface). For modern examples of critics working against this view of the Gothic and seeking to open out attitudes towards its use of the supernatural, see in particular Carter, Punter, and Clery, as well as collections such as Norton's *Gothic Readings: The First Wave, 1764-1840*.

new historicist, or cultural studies assessments that find many class-based, ideological, and even technological conflicts of particular historical times underlying the spectral or monstrous manifestations in Gothic works from several different eras. (4)

Further, while Clery refers to ‘those twentieth-century commentators who have insisted that Gothic novels are escapist fictions set in the distant past’ (129), a view that echoed the equally persistent and reductive criticism of fantasy literature in general, more recent critics such as Stockwell have suggested that Gothic fiction, that ‘most metaphorical of writing’, through its ‘defamiliarisation of the world by the alteration of its natural or social laws’ provides a way to comment ‘on current issues in a distorting mirror...in a way that the mainstream, post-Romantic realist tradition can only struggle towards’ (8-9). While many of these views are fruitful and continuously expanding into new avenues of enquiry, what these claims of distorted political commentary or fanciful escapism suggest is that much modern criticism still seems to be affected by the notion that the supernatural elements in Gothic fiction would not – and could not – have been taken seriously by its readers, but performed symbolic or allegorical functions instead. Such a view however, seems not only unlikely, but fails to take into account several important factors that paint a very different picture of the eighteenth-century reading imagination, and the rationale of popular tastes.

The first piece of evidence against this view is that both early and recent criticisms that treat the Gothic’s supernatural elements as idle entertainment do not answer the important and necessary question of why the Gothic became such a widespread and popular form of literature and was devoured by the public with such a seemingly voracious appetite. As one writer rather humorously expressed in *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* in 1818, ‘surely romance writers are far more numerous than philosophers, and might be well able to mob any prating son of Epicurus who attempted to undermine the credit of their machinery.’²⁵ In other words, the philosophers and critics who attempted to discredit the supernatural in Gothic fiction were far outnumbered by the droves of writers and readers who created and consumed these novels in the thousands. Yet what was it about the Gothic novels that had readers turning again and again to this kind of literature, and saw the novels themselves ‘sometimes torn’ as they ‘flew...from hand to hand’ (Scott cited in Howard viii)? This question is somewhat answered by the second factor often overlooked by criticism that believes in a sceptical reception of Gothic’s supernatural elements: that is, the very real atmosphere of terror that surrounded the Gothic novels – the fact that many ‘poor terrified readers’, as

²⁵ ‘Some Remarks on the Use of the Preternatural in Works of Fiction’ *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* 3.18 (September 1818): 648-50, p. 50.

Prevost and Blangdon wrote in 1803, were kept ‘tremblingly alive throughout the night, to make them look haggardly the next morning, for want of balmy rest’ because of the Gothic novels’ penchant for conjuring ‘ghosts, murderers, magicians, faries [sic], devils’ and ‘all those things invented to murder sleep’ (393). Indeed, while the Gothic novels were widely known as the ‘literature of terror’, the severity of the fearful public reaction to the Gothic – and particularly to its supernatural elements – was such that Sir Walter Scott questioned in 1810 ‘whether there be a source of emotion in the whole mental frame so powerful or universal as *the fear arising from objects of invisible terror*. Perhaps there is no other that has been, at some point or other of life the predominant and indelible sensation of every mind, of every class, and under every circumstance’.²⁶

While this reaction of terror upon encountering the supernatural in Gothic fiction was clearly widespread, what it suggests, more importantly, is that the supernatural elements were not merely encountered as idle figments of the author’s imagination, nor as the exploded superstitions of ages past, but were instead experienced, and indeed sought out, as examples of what was considered, at the very least, a *potentially* real phenomenon: a threat not only to the novels’ protagonists, but potentially to the reader as well. That the Gothic novels produced such a pronounced emotional reaction in their readers, and the fact that they sustained the kind of enduring power that they held over the aesthetic and commercial trends in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, suggests that they were not merely encountered as examples of potentially real phenomena, but specifically tapped into what was already a widespread and deeply set curiosity about the supernatural within the greater public imagination. Despite the general critical resistance to the notion, more than merely satisfying a desire for ‘escapism’ (the charge often levelled at the appeal of fantasy literature), or serving as symbolic or allegorical commentary on eighteenth-century society (though many Gothic works certainly satisfied that element too), Gothic fiction served primarily to provide a specific medium through which an otherwise ‘enlightened’ public could access, experience and investigate what were actually very real interests in, and fears about, the supernatural. According to Sir Walter Scott in his introduction to *The Castle of Otranto* in 1811, the Gothic novels, despite the prevailing critical vilification levelled against them, continued to ‘appeal to that secret and reserved feeling of love for the marvellous and supernatural, which occupies a hidden corner in almost every one’s bosom’ (324). As such, it was through the Gothic novels that the public could gain the closest access to what was increasingly becoming the

²⁶ ‘Review of Maturin’s *Fatal Revenge; or, the Family of Montorio*’ *Quarterly Review* 3 (May 1810): 339-47.

most tantalising frontier of eighteenth-century experience: the question of what lay ‘beyond the veil’.

While this may seem a contentious claim, given the critical fashion described above, it is one that is clearly borne out in countless examples across the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and one that existed for several important reasons. Yet it is first important to point out that these arguments against the general attitude that treats the Gothic as an idle entertainment quite removed from the prevailing concerns of enlightenment society, and its reception as one of indifferent amusement, do not conversely suggest that the supernatural was implicitly believed in by the readers that voraciously consumed Gothic novels. To argue that the supernatural was not consumed merely as idle entertainment is not to suggest that it was read with absolute conviction or that all its readers were motivated by anything other than a desire for escapism. Rather, the very duality persisting in the tension between personal and critical responses to the Gothic, and to the supernatural at large, suggests a more complex approach to the problem of the supernatural at the heart of eighteenth century society. What the Gothic novels drew upon and exploited was not a blind superstition, as some critics of the time feared, but an underlying uncertainty toward the ontological status of the supernatural that was based entirely on the fact that it could neither be proved nor disproved, a fact that served to undermine the harsh pragmatism of enlightenment views. The general attitude during the eighteenth century is perhaps best described by the German, Gottold Lessing, whose passage, written in June 1767, is worth quoting at length for its illustration of the high tensions abounding between the fashionable critical vilification of the supernatural and the widespread passionate desire to experience it:

We no longer believe in ghosts? Who says that? Or rather, what does it mean? Does it mean we are so advanced in our knowledge that we can prove the impossibility of ghosts? Does it mean that certain incontrovertible truths which contradict belief in ghosts have become so widely accepted, are so insistently and invariably present in even the most ordinary person that everything which conflicts with them must of necessity seem to him ridiculous and absurd? No, it cannot mean that. The statement “we no longer believe in ghosts” can only mean that in this matter, concerning which almost as much can be said for as against, which has not been finally decided and *cannot be decided*, the prevailing mode of thought has tilted the scales in favour of disbelief. Some people do hold this opinion, and many want to give the impression they do. *These produce all the arguments and set the fashion.* The majority keeps silent, they express no firm opinion, *they cannot make up their minds.* *During daylight hours they listen with approval when ghosts are ridiculed but in the dead of night they shudder as they listen to tales about them.* (my emphasis. Cited in Maxwell-Stuart 173-4)

This pithy statement is crucial in its illustration of several key factors about the eighteenth-century attitude toward the supernatural that the Gothic tapped into. The first is that the century was characterised by a paradoxical polarity between an outwardly fashionable veneer of rational, enlightenment scepticism towards the supernatural and the literature that contained it, and yet a private yearning to experience the very object of this disdain. This trend created an atmosphere of duality that might in some respects be called hypocritical: often, where Gothic novels were most openly and brazenly criticised, they were also the most deeply enjoyed. Indeed, according to the Reverend F. Prevost and F. Blangdon, while ‘the generality of people hold’ Gothic novels ‘with reason, in great contempt...perhaps, few deride them more than those who read them most’ (394).

The second key factor in the eighteenth-century reception of the supernatural is that it was commonly accompanied by a very real sense of fear – a fear that stood in opposition to all the enlightenment objections to the notion of a real supernatural and thus indicates the suspension of doubt that it encouraged. It is in this respect that Varnado contrasts the ghostly tale with later fantasies and fairytales in its degree of relationship with reality. In supernatural tales, Varnado argues, ‘we have a distinct element of feeling which is not drawn from ordinary, or “natural,” experience but which nevertheless evokes an echo from the reader’s sense of reality’ (5). Unless the reader ‘can summon up a feeling that something “ghostly” *might* exist...the story will carry no interest or meaning’ (5). ‘That is why *realism* is the sine qua non of the ghostly tale and why writers of such tales work hard to create the proper sense of verisimilitude. The ghost story stands or falls on its power to convince the reader that the *feeling of the supernatural*’, in other words, the ‘numinous’, ‘corresponds to some element in reality’ (5), and it is therefore this *potential* reality of the supernatural that affords the Gothic tale its capacity to enthrall and terrify its readers.

Following on from this notion is the third and most important fact about the eighteenth-century reception of the supernatural in Gothic literature: namely, that the fear generated by these texts was rooted in the fact that, for all the enlightenment objections waged against it, the ontological status of the supernatural ‘cannot be decided’ because of the difficulty of attaining proof either for or against the phenomena.²⁷ In short, the Gothic novels created their pervasive mood of fear and terror by playing upon the reader’s own uncertainty over the reality of the supernatural in the everyday world. This tension between the poles of scepticism and superstition is perhaps the single most important aspect of the supernatural as it was

²⁷ See the discussion of the reasons why the supernatural evaded such definitive classification below.

encountered, imagined and investigated across the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, for what it created was a liminal space in which the supernatural evaded definitive acceptance or rejection. What the Gothic novels centrally explored, therefore, was a concept of the supernatural that, by the very fact that it could neither be proven nor disproved, was kept within a tantalising state of potential. This potentiality was evidently appealing both to well educated and less educated readers, who were motivated to consume a great deal of its discursive representation. It is this ambivalent line between reality and imagination – the notion of the possible impossible – that attracts the audiences and forms the basis of the spectacle and its generation of excitement. In this way, the Gothic novels appeal not to those who unconditionally believe in the supernatural, but to those who most desire proof either way: to those who maintain a perpetual state of hesitation between superstition and scepticism that writers such as Lessing and Prevost express.²⁸ This last category of reader, I argue, is characteristic of the vast majority of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century society when confronted with the supernatural. Moreover, it is this ambiguity, this hesitation between the two poles of belief and disbelief, that provides the supernatural with its enduring power and will see its continued trajectory throughout the scientific and literary investigations of the centuries to follow.

AMBIGUITY, SPACE & THE SUPERNATURAL

One of the most rational arguments for the potential reality of the supernatural was the growing awareness in the eighteenth century of the limits of human knowledge, spurred on by its rapidly increasing scientific, technological and philosophical fields. In the expanding climate of empire and the broader human cultural knowledge it brought with it, logic and rhetoric were even applied by major contemporary writers such as Addison and Johnson to rationalize the existence of the supernatural on a global historical scale. In 1711, Addison writes that he thinks ‘a person who is thus terrified with the imagination of ghosts and spectres much more reasonable than one who, contrary to the reports of all historians, sacred and profane, ancient and modern, and to the traditions of all nations, thinks the appearance of

²⁸ Carter supports this idea, arguing that ‘such fiction could not have been written in earlier periods, when the existence of the supernatural was universally accepted. The modern ghost story is addressed to a reader sceptical about ghosts’ (18). In a similar vein, Clery suggests that ‘the mental state of suspension in doubt was itself in the course of becoming a fetish; certainty would abolish this source of abject pleasure. Doubt concerning the existence of spirits would increasingly operate as a mechanism of fictions to which individuals might voluntarily subscribe’ (32).

spirits fabulous and groundless' (*Spectator* 110 [6 July 1711]). Johnson appeals to the same logic in 1759 when he argues:

that the dead are seen no more...I will not undertake to maintain against the concurrent and unvaried testimony of all ages, all nations. There is no people, rude or learned, among whom apparitions of the dead are not related and believed. This opinion, which, perhaps, prevails as far as human nature is diffused, could become universal only by its truth: those, that never heard of one another, would not have agreed in a tale which nothing but experience can make credible. That it is doubted by single cavillers can very little weaken the general evidence. (From his tale 'Rasselas,' cited in Clery 21)

Likewise, in his 1797 review of M. G. Lewis's Gothic novel *The Monk*, Coleridge argues that 'The extent of the powers that may exist, we can never ascertain; and therefore we feel no great difficulty in yielding a temporary belief to any, the strangest, situation of *things*' (cited in Norton 298). The endurance of such notions is shown in the fact that the same idea is still being expressed in 1815, when Jean Paul writes:

The first miracle is the very idea of a miracle right in the machinery of senses, the belief in an extraordinary world in spite of the eternal contradiction of the ordinary world. The incomprehensible, after all, is the core and value both of the universe and of knowledge.²⁹

This passage touches on one of the most fundamental driving forces behind the eighteenth-century curiosity with the supernatural: the desire, in an increasingly rational, material and scientific age, for the extraordinary and incomprehensible. Indeed, three years after this passage, in 1818, a writer, offering 'Some Remarks on the Use of the Preternatural in Works of Fiction' for *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, wrote that:

even in the most enlightened age, so desirous is the human mind of an outlet by which to escape from the narrow circle of visible things into the unknown and unlimited world, that surely poets should be permitted to feign all wonders which cannot be proved to be impossible, and which are not contradictory to the spirit of our religion...To this class belong(s) the re-appearance of the dead.³⁰

This last passage, as well as revealing the social impetus behind the desire for the supernatural and providing a neat defence of the Gothic's indulgence of this curiosity, also reveals one of

²⁹ Preface to F. L. F. v. Dobeneck, 'Des deutschen Mittelalters Volksglauben und Heroen-Sagen.' *Samtliche Werke, Historisch-kritische, Ausgabe*, ed. E. Berend (Weimar: Bohlau, 1938), xvi. Both De Quincey and MacDonald would be heavily influenced by the writings of Jean Paul in their creations of imaginative dream works. See Chapters Five and Six below.

³⁰ 'Some Remarks on the Use of the Preternatural in Works of Fiction' *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 3:18 (September 1818): 648-50.

the most significant reasons behind the supernatural's perpetually elusive quality: that is, its connections with religion and accompanying notions of God. This connection was an immensely important one, for theoretically, to deny the existence of the supernatural altogether also meant a denial of the existence of God. Carter notes the important role that Christianity played in maintaining the ambivalence of the supernatural throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, where 'even those, like Bishop Hurd, who dismiss such entities as "exploded fancies" would not reject the supernatural so far as to deny the existence of God' (2).³¹ Carter argues that this kind of 'tension between scorn for credulity and aversion to materialism' characterizes 'tales of the marvellous and fantastic' at this time (2). It is this kind of tension that allows Hirsch to claim that 'Gothic fictions remind us...that the world can never be thoroughly grasped or comprehended. At the close they question the reliability of the evidence they have themselves been presenting' (9). Indeed, this direct comparison of supernatural phenomena such as ghosts and goblins with the established authority of the Christian religion is present in many Gothic novels. An apt example occurs in Ann Radcliffe's 1790 novel *A Sicilian Romance*, in which one of her characters states, 'Who shall say that anything is impossible to God? We know that he has made us, who are embodied spirits; he, therefore, can make unembodied spirits' (1.83).

Indeed, the connection between the supernatural and Christianity was so strong that during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, 'reports of apparitions and portents were often published as factual' by writers such as Defoe and Fielding in a bid to counter the spread of atheism (Carter 23). The Cambridge divine Ralph Cudworth exemplifies the thinking behind this approach, which generally held that 'if there be once any visible ghosts or spirits acknowledged as things permanent, it will not be easy for any to give a reason why there

³¹ Similarly, Ford notes the impact of Christianity on traditional approaches to dreaming from the fourth century to the Renaissance, where dreams appear to be both validated and condemned – an ambiguity that allowed them to occupy a similar position to notions of the supernatural in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries – and dreams themselves would frequently feature in Gothic texts as both narrative devices and prophetic mediums (an interest that the Romantic writers would expand upon). Ford writes that 'the Bible often validated the use of dreams as predictive tools (the Old Testament stories of Joseph and Daniel, the appearance of God's angel to Joseph in the New Testament), but at times the Bible also lent its authority to a suspicious attitude toward dreaming. For instance, in Deuteronomy, dreams are strongly condemned: "Neither let there be found among you any one ... that consulteth sooth-sayers, or observeth dreams and omens, neither let there be any wizard, Nor charmer, nor any one that consulteth pythonic spirits, or fortune-tellers, or that seeketh the truth from the dead. For the Lord abhorreth all these things"' (13). Clearly this apparent clash between dreams as used by God and dreams, in the historical context of the passage, as used by non-Christian 'pagan' practitioners can be understood. In addition, the very appearance of such 'supernatural' phenomena as wizards, spirits and fortune-tellers goes some way towards legitimizing them. It is unclear whether these supernatural forces are abhorred by God because they are not real, or because, though real, they derive their powers from un-Christian sources. This unclear position of the Church on the reality and source of supernatural ideas and dreaming provides much of the ambiguity that will continue to underpin the discussion on these matters throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. See Chapter Four for a specific discussion of the Romantic engagement with the Gothic and dreams in particular.

might not be one supreme ghost also, presiding over them all and the whole world' (cited in Clery 19). As Carter expresses, a 'visitation from beyond death proves the existence of the soul and, therefore, in many apologetic writings of the time, contributes to proving the existence of God Himself. Cataloguing supernatural phenomena strikes a blow against materialism' (23) – against 'the world of dead mechanism, the world of mere extension and movement, ushered in by the new philosophy' (Stock 65).³²

Moreover, as well as proving the existence of God, for many in the eighteenth century, the idea of the supernatural, for all the terror enjoined with it in the Gothic novels, was also a comforting one, for, regardless of religious preference, it provided proof of the immortality of the soul and the existence of an afterlife. Samuel Johnson 'is quoted as declaring, in 1778, that the reality of ghosts is "a question, whether in theology or philosophy, one of the most important that can come before the human understanding"' (Carter 27-8). Maxwell-Stuart's comments on the Spiritualism of the early twentieth century are equally applicable to the obsession with ghosts and the supernatural that was occurring in the eighteenth century. He argues:

This desire was not limited to those of religious belief, and it was one of the strengths of Spiritualism that it catered for those who simply wished to ascertain whether the spirit continues after death and whether communication between the living and the dead be possible, regardless of any attendant notion even of God, let alone the specific assertions about life after death explicitly or implicitly defined by the Christian faith, while it also claimed to answer the same questions raised by those who had a particular religious commitment. (216)

This wide applicability of the supernatural to a general desire for the numinous irrespective of religious faith is an important factor in securing the supernatural's enduring hold over the eighteenth-century imagination, particularly in its growing climate of destabilised religion and increasing awareness and study of different cultures and their religious beliefs. Varma argues that 'Primarily, the Gothic novels arose out of a quest for the numinous' and 'other-worldly gratification', but that this appreciation was not necessarily religious: Gothic novels seek a "*frisson*" of the supernatural' in which the reader is moved 'away from the arid glare of rationalism towards the beckoning shadows of a more intimate and mystical interpretation of life,' which they found in the 'profound sense of the numinous' that the Gothic privileged

³² See also Maxwell-Stuart (174-5) for the Christian use of the supernatural to support its claims.

(211). As such, it touches on the very basis of spirituality from which religious belief is born: that desire for the numinous and for greater meaning in a vast and chaotic world.³³

It is this desire, and the fact that it represents a yearning deep at the heart of most readers of Gothic literature, that prompts writers such as Sir Walter Scott to pronounce in 1810 that Gothic literature ‘is *not* the weak and trivial impulse of the nursery, to be forgotten and scorned by manhood. It is the aspiration of a spirit; “it is the passion of immortals,” that dread and desire of their final habitation.’³⁴ The final two words of this passage are particularly significant to both a historical calculation of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century attitudes toward the supernatural and the history of Gothic and fantastic literature, so the importance of Scott’s word choice here cannot be overemphasised. Rather than desiring merely proof of the immortality of the soul, Scott has framed the ‘proof’ offered by the notion of ghosts and spirits in specifically spatial terms, where they suggest a place of ‘final habitation’ – whether Heaven or a like spirit world – and this world is inferred, by the very desire of attaining prove of it, to be quite separate from the world of everyday earthly existence. This notion is an extremely important one, for it is precisely this spatial construction of the supernatural – where it is imagined to exist within a world ‘beyond’ our own and yet with access to ours – that allows it to remain likewise ‘beyond’ the reach of the increasingly widespread and vigorous attempts to quantify, investigate, or discount it.

This was an idea that had existed for some time, manifest in medieval and classical literature. In like manner are Samuel Johnson’s comment in 1784 concerning a ‘spectral vision purportedly seen by Thomas, Lord Lyttleton,’ of which, he said, ‘I am so glad to have every evidence of the *spiritual world*, that I am willing to believe it’ (cited in Carter 28, my italics), and Joseph Glanville’s belief ‘that the stories of *Witches*, *Apparitions*, and indeed every thing that brings tidings of another world, are’ not, as some would claim, merely ‘*melancholick Dreams*, and pious *Romances*’ (cited in Clery 20). These spatial constructions of the supernatural as belonging to ‘another world’ are the single most important factor in the history of supernaturalism and are the greatest factors in maintaining the hesitation with which it was considered throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is this ambiguity and hesitation, due to the inaccessibility of the very particular and unique kind of

³³ It is in this respect that the Gothic seeks a relationship with popular eighteenth-century notions of the sublime. See below and later, in Chapter Three, for discussions on the importance of the sublime in considerations of both the Gothic in general, and the representation of the supernatural and its space in particular.

³⁴ Sir Walter Scott (attrib.) ‘Review of Maturin’s *Fatal Revenge; or, the Family of Montorio*’ *Quarterly Review* 3 (May 1810): 339-47.

space that the numinous has been granted in its literary and folkloric depictions, that remains Gothic's most important and most lasting trait upon its literary (and cultural) descendants. It is the increasing tendency of authors over the following century to explore this alternative kind of space within the imaginative bounds afforded by literature that most directly led to the development of the modern fantasy genre, marked as separate from its antecedents by its creation of completely separate 'other worlds.' Moreover, the specific construction of these spaces as 'beyond' the limits of the everyday world mean that they can be seen as early precursors of the higher-dimensional space, or hyperspace, that would begin to be theorized and would cause such a prodigious public stir in the 1860s, and it is through such parallels that the dual scientific and literary pathway to theories of hyperspace and modern literary fantasy can be traced.

THE GOTHIC & SUPERNATURAL SPACE

Significantly, the Christian notion of the spirit world or heaven is a concept that closely parallels the similar notions of spirit spaces from folklore and mythology, which were commonly referred to as 'the other world', 'the spirit world', 'the spirit realm', 'the land of spirits', 'beyond the vale' and so on. All of these spatial constructions are posited 'beyond' the limits of the traditional three-dimensional physical world, despite the scientific belief, expressed by Kant in 1783, that scientifically and mathematically speaking, the three dimensions of physical space were not limits, but the totality of spatial reality:

everywhere space (which [in its entirety] is itself no longer the boundary of another space) has three dimensions and that space cannot in any way have more, is based on the proposition that not more than three lines can intersect at right angles in one point; but this proposition cannot by any means be shown from concepts, but rests immediately on intuition and indeed on pure and *a priori* intuition, because it is apodictically certain. (*Prolegomena* 37-8)

Yet in spiritual, literary, and gradually more scientific terms, there is a definite evocation of space beyond these dimensions, positing the physical world not as the entirety of space, but as a space with limits, and beyond which existed an invisible spiritual world.

Carter argues that 'an important use of the supernatural in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century fiction is to provide space for speculation about nonmaterial dimensions of existence, without

demanding a positive act of either acceptance or rejection' (3). Importantly, this 'space' is not merely a metaphorical one involving a 'space' created in the public consciousness for collective discussion and speculation on ideas of the supernatural, nor merely the metaphorical 'space' that is the imagined world of the text – the 'closed off region within an outer world' that becomes, through the process of reading, 'the landscape of the mind' (MacAndrew 109-110). Importantly, this 'space' is also a literal one, where the Gothic and Romantic dream-texts and fantastic tales being presented draw upon the other-world traditions of folklore to begin mapping out the metaphysical and psychological realities of a real kind of space: an ambiguous liminal space that existed both within the world and outside of it. In doing so, it has been suggested that Gothic fiction aims to provide 'other-worldly gratification' (Varma 211) – 'the pleasure of contemplating the hypothetical existence of a realm beyond the merely material' (Carter 5).

To a certain extent, the supernatural has always been spoken of in spatial terms and in the folklore of most cultures, especially the Celtic and Greek from which the British literary imagination drew so heavily, the notion of a spiritual 'other-world' was common.³⁵ Moreover, as the eighteenth-century demand for supernatural literature increased, descriptions of the 'other realm' were handed down in the literature that writers and publishers began to turn to and revive in order to satisfy this demand. One of the most important examples of early spatial supernatural can be found in the works of Shakespeare, which were becoming increasingly popular as Gothic writers such as Ann Radcliffe appealed to his authority to legitimize their own supernatural fictions. Indeed, according to McKillop, 'for the eighteenth century *Macbeth* and *Hamlet* were the supreme instances of the use of the supernatural in literature' (353) and it is this example that Radcliffe appeals to in her 1826 defence of the Gothic, 'On the Supernatural in Poetry.' Importantly, as well as appealing indirectly to Shakespeare's authority, Radcliffe emphasizes the important relationship between

³⁵ Richard Hurd traces a long history between the Greek literature of antiquity and the medieval Gothic literature that was being revived during the eighteenth century in his essay of 1762 entitled *Letters on Chivalry and Romance*; an essay that was intended to justify the literary merit of the current vogue for Gothic fictions. He argues 'Greek antiquity very much resembles the Gothic. For what are Homer's Laestrigons, and Cyclops, but bands of lawless savages, with, each of them, a Giant of enormous size at their head? And what are the Grecian Bacchus, Hercules, and Theseus but Knights-errant, the exact counter-parts of Sir Launcelot and Amadis de Gaule? Nay, could the very castle of a Gothic giant be better described than in the words of Homer,

"High walls and battlements the courts inclose,

And the strong gates defy a host of foes."

Od. B. XVII. Ver. 318.

And do not you remember that the Grecian worthies were, in their day, as famous for encountering Dragons and quelling Monsters of all sorts, as for suppressing Giants?' (31-2).

supernatural beings in literature and their physical, spatial setting by setting Shakespeare's *Hamlet* as the prime example:

Above every ideal being is the ghost of Hamlet, with all its attendant incidents of time and place. The dark watch upon the remote platform, the dreary aspect of the night...the recollection of a star, an unknown world, are all circumstances which excite forlorn, melancholy and solemn feelings, and dispose us to welcome, with trembling curiosity, the awful being that draws near.³⁶

In Radcliffe's view, Shakespeare adopts techniques similar to her own, in grounding the supernatural temporally and physically within evocative settings, and thus producing greater curiosity, terror and excitement through the clear juxtaposition of the natural world and the 'unknown world' of the supernatural.³⁷

Significantly, it is in *Macbeth* that we find one of the most evocative and enduring metaphors of the supernatural that calls into being a unique space for its existence that exists beyond the limits of the everyday physical world. In this play, Shakespeare draws upon many folkloric and medieval ideas of the supernatural by casting the witches as ambiguous, liminal beings who seem to tread the borders between the everyday world and another, supernatural 'beyond' space: neither male nor female and inhabiting the fenlands at the fringes of the world of civilization and reason, not unlike the woodlands and dales of folklore's Fairyland, the witches 'come like shadows' and 'so depart' (IV.i.111), 'look not like th'inhabitants o'th'earth, / and yet are on't' (I.iii.42-3), seem 'corporal' and yet melt 'as breath into the wind' (I.iii.82-3).³⁸ More importantly, the fact that the witches are not merely strange inhabitants of the everyday world but hail from an alternative 'beyond' space – a true liminal threshold that is paradoxically within and yet outside the earth – is indicated in Banquo's

³⁶ This idea had been expressed earlier. For example, in his 1762 defence of contemporary Gothic fictions, *Letters on Chivalry and Romance*, Richard Hurd attributes the poetic genius of Shakespeare to his supernatural subject matter at the same time that he appeals to the authority of this great author (as well as Milton and the Greek writers such as Virgil and Homer) to justify the use and literary value of the supernatural in literature: 'Shakespeare...with a terrible sublime (which not so much the energy of his genius, as the nature of his subject drew from him) gives us another idea of the *rough magic*, as he calls it, of fairy enchantment' (50).

³⁷ Ann Radcliffe provides a description of her experience upon observing *Macbeth* at the theatre in 1826: 'So vexatious is the effect of the stage-witches upon my mind, that I should probably have left the theatre when they appeared, had not the fascination of Mrs. Siddons's influence so spread itself over the whole play, as to overcome my disgust, and to make me forget even Shakspeare himself; while all consciousness of fiction was lost, and his thoughts lived and breathed before me in the very form of truth. Mrs. Siddons, like Shakspeare, always disappears in the character she represents, and throws an illusion over the whole scene around her.' ('On the Supernatural in Poetry. By the Late Mrs. Radcliffe' *New Monthly Magazine* [1826], 145-52, p. 147). On the importance of Shakespeare to Gothic writers, see also Hogle 30.

³⁸ According to Charles Bucke, Radcliffe's 'favourite tragedy was *Macbeth*' ('A Meeting with Mrs Radcliffe' *On the Beauties, Harmonies, and Sublimities of Nature*. New Edition, Vol. 2. London: Thomas Tegg and Son, 1837. 123). See below for a discussion of Radcliffe's opinions concerning the representations of the witches as supernatural beings in *Macbeth*.

statement that ‘the earth hath bubbles, as the water has, / and these are of them’ (I.iii.80-1). Bubbles, which represent fleeting, changeable and isolated worlds along the liminal divide between two spaces – air and water – and that are at once part of both these worlds and yet separate and part of neither, stand as an eloquent representation of the long-standing Celtic folkloric idea of a supernatural realm that was often described as ‘beyond the pale’, or accessible only during the liminal hours of twilight. It is an interesting spatial construction: a poetic and symbolic way of theorizing the kind of impossible space imagined to contain the supernatural.

This spatial construction of the supernatural also existed outside literary representations. By 1668 this ‘beyond’ space of the supernatural is considered commonplace enough in popular knowledge for Joseph Glanvill, a member of the Royal Society, to call ‘for an extension of scientific knowledge to include the supernatural’ in terms that clearly reflect its unique spatial construction in both literal and metaphorical senses: ‘as things are for the present, the LAND of SPIRITS is a kinde of AMERICA, and not well discover’d *Region*’ (cited in Clery 19). We find no difference in the eighteenth century, and it is during this time that supernatural space comes under closest attention not only in literature, but in scientific, moral and aesthetic theories of the imagination as the supernatural begins to increasingly dominate the public imagination. Thus in 1773 Anna and John Aikin in their aforementioned essay ‘On the Pleasures Derived from Objects of Terror’ describe the process behind the current vogue of encountering the supernatural:

A strange and unexpected event awakens the mind, and keeps it on the stretch; and where the agency of invisible beings is introduced, of ‘forms unseen, and mightier far than we’, our imagination, darting forth, explores with rapture the *new world which is laid open to its view*, and rejoices in the expansion of its powers. (my emphasis)

The ‘new world’ that is opened up by the introduction of ‘invisible beings’ is significant for the progression of ideas of the spatial realm of the supernatural in two ways. Firstly, the ‘new world’ is a physical one, albeit a hypothetical world: in extending the characters’ perceptions beyond the world of the every day into the ‘new world’ of the supernatural, the Aikins imply a supernatural realm that is evoked both within the literature itself, and upon the reader’s reflection, proposed as a possibility within the external world as well. Secondly, this ‘new world’ is a spatial metaphor for the expanded powers of the imagination: a new mental realm opened up in which the mind can play. This last construction of the spatial ‘world’ invoked by ideas of the supernatural is particularly significant because it represents the chiastic divide

that would characterise thought on the supernatural for the rest of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, where the space it occupied could achieve ‘reality’ in two overlapping ways – either as an external and scientifically verifiable ‘other realm’ or as an internal, psychological space akin to that of dreaming.

Indeed, that the Gothic writers were consciously drawing upon this emerging spatial construction of the imagination and its overlap with ‘the other world’ of the supernatural is indicated by Ann Radcliffe’s echoing of the Aikins’ spatial language in her own defence of the virtue of imagination in the modern age (and by implication, its excitement by the kind of Gothic novels she was writing). She writes:

What ardent imagination ever was contented to trust to plain reasoning, or to the evidence of the senses? It may not willingly confine itself to the dull truths *of this earth*, but, *eager to expand its faculties*, to fill its capacity, and to experience its own peculiar delights, soars after new wonders *into a world of its own*. (my emphasis)

Like the Aikins’ passage, the imagination for Radcliffe bears the ability to extend beyond the earthly material world into a world that is not just psychological, but bears, through its relationship with the earthly, a ‘reality’ in the physical universe too. It is a spatial construction of the imagination and the supernatural that she repeats in her novel *The Italian*, whose monk ‘would, perhaps, have been somewhat disappointed, to have descended suddenly from the region of fearful sublimity to which he had soared...to the earth, on which he daily walked’ (1.152-3). This ‘region’ of sublimity, connected with the consideration of the supernatural, to which one can ‘soar’ parallels both the liminal construction of the supernatural as occurring within a space beyond ‘the earth, on which he daily walked’ and the liminal construction of the ‘region’ of the imagination. The overlapping material and psychological meanings involved in such uses of spatial metaphors to describe the supernatural and its literary evocation are particularly important in the context of the eighteenth-century Gothic because, as will be explored in Chapter Four, it is shortly after this time, during the 1790s, that the writers now called ‘Romantic’ use this chiasmic spatial construction to elevate the supernatural to a serious subject of enquiry and in doing so, consolidate the power it will continue to hold over the public imagination throughout the long nineteenth century.

Moreover, what reflections such as Radcliffe’s and the Aikins’ illustrate is a particular concern not only with space, but more precisely, with the borders, boundaries and thresholds *between* spaces and with the movement from one side to the other: the expansion of the

imagination into a 'new world' or, in the case of the Gothic novels that elicited such expansion, the visiting of ghostly spirits from 'beyond' the grave. Indeed, as Carter notes, the Gothic novels share 'a concern with human perception of events at the boundary between nature and supernature' (3). That this focus on liminal space was shared by the Gothic novels and the emerging theories of imagination is significant as it creates a liminal kind of space in which the Gothic novels could be considered: a space both physically within and yet psychologically beyond the everyday world – a space where absolute judgement could be suspended and reality questioned, stretched, altered and considered anew in a liminal space free from repercussions in the 'real' world – a space, significantly, opened up between the spaces of the material world and the 'beyond' by the process of reading.³⁹

Such psychological and philosophical implications of literary representations of the marvellous were often discussed in the eighteenth century. Most interesting is Ludwig Tieck's essay, published in 1796, on Shakespeare's use of the marvellous, in which he 'takes for granted Diderot's opposition between the marvellous and the realistic, but unlike Diderot and like Breitingen he associates illusion with the marvellous' (Bosse 218). As Bosse explains, for Tieck, 'fiction is not confronted with truth or reality, it is first of all concerned with the marks...of truth or reality' (219). But if 'all marks of reality are absent from the marvelous it does not necessarily follow that the marvelous is not real, though it does follow that the marvelous is not that reality which we know by established marks' (220). This imagined world may be so 'unnatural' that it takes on its own kind of natural quality when a reader is immersed in that imaginary world whose 'functioning can be discussed in such elusive terms as...the organization of a world of its own' (218). Such notions were commonly echoed by critics of the Gothic: as late as 1826, Thomas Noon Talfourd described the Gothic mood as one in which 'the world seems shut out, and we breathe only in an enchanted region' (cited in Howard xi). Significantly, for Tieck, liminal worlds such as these represent not just another possible reality or world – but the opposite – 'the other world' (218): the dark side of the looking glass from which our own world must appear strange. Importantly, this idea suggests that there are, then, different kinds of reality: 'As soon as reality is known through marks, experience will become a sort of interpretation and different experiences may lead to different realities' (220). 'The marvellous tells us that there is another reality, related to the world as we know it, as that which is always beyond our circle of vision. It is something real and at the

³⁹ In her preface to *Evelina* (1778), Fanny Burney warns her reader in similar terms to expect no transportation 'to the fantastic regions of Romance, where Fiction is coloured by all the gay tints of luxurious Imagination, where Reason is an outcast and where the sublimity of the Marvellous rejects all aid from sober Probability' (7).

same time a mark of something which is beyond reality' (219). Indeed, 'whatever the world is, the marvellous will be an index that there is more to it' (220).

More importantly, this kind of liminal space bore its own very significant kind of power, as, in the context of a potentially real spiritual dimension, it was often treated as if it bore the ability to draw the natural and supernatural worlds together not just in the imagination, but in the physical world too. As readers imaginatively trod the boundary between nature and supernature, their minds were 'expanded' to transgress their usual boundaries and to enter a 'new world', an 'other world' – the same kind of extra-dimensional space that was imagined for the supernatural. In other words, reading about the supernatural carried the disturbing potential to bring 'the other world' close: to diminish the distance that usually separated the earthly and the immaterial realms. This drawing together of the everyday and the imagined worlds is explained in part by the notion, essential to the act of reading, of 'aesthetic distance' as described by Bulloch and Heller. For Heller, aesthetic distance is 'the relationship between the reader and the *whole* work at any stage in the reading process' (2). Bulloch argues that 'what is most desirable...in a work of art "is the utmost decrease of distance without its disappearance"' (Heller 3). Aesthetic distance is drastically reduced when the reader takes the text for reality, while too much aesthetic distance draws attention to the text's fictionality and might induce a reader to feel uninterested or uninvolved in the text. Significantly, Heller argues that 'the concept of aesthetic distance is important because it seems to be in the nature of the tale of terror to threaten aesthetic distance' (3). In other words, the reactions of fear produced by the Gothic novels suggest that the aesthetic distance between the world of the reader and the world of the text (or the supernatural world it describes) has been diminished almost to the point of disappearing altogether.⁴⁰ Importantly, the concept of aesthetic distance is itself a spatial one, and for the eighteenth-century Gothic, this spatial diminishing occurred both at the level of imagination and at the level of physical space as it was conceived in popular notions of the supernatural. This notion lends particular significance to an opinion expressed in a review of Radcliffe's *Udolpho* which appeared in the *Critical Review* in August 1794 and which argued that *Udolpho* shared with Radcliffe's earlier *Romance of the Forest* 'the same mysterious terrors' that 'are continually exciting in the mind the idea of a supernatural appearance, keeping us, as it were, *upon the very edge and confines of the world of spirits*' (my italics).⁴¹

⁴⁰ See Heller's 'Introduction' (1-17) for more detail on the processes of reading and cognitive world-building that occur when engaging with texts.

⁴¹ 'Review of Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho*' *Critical Review* 11 (August, 1794): 361-3, p. 361. The article, which suggests that Radcliffe was gifted by some of the same muses that endowed Shakespeare with his genius,

The fact that the supernatural was imagined to occur within such a ‘beyond’ space, and the fact that ideas about the supernatural were encountered and considered within a similar ‘beyond’ space mobilised during the process of reading, meant that the supernatural was kept ‘beyond’ the reach of the increasing attempts in the eighteenth century to measure and quantify it. While, these kinds of liminal psychological, literary and supernatural spaces served to wrest the supernatural from the grasp of the sceptics and keep it firmly out of reach of those who would attempt to discredit accounts of its existence, they also kept it tauntingly beyond those who sought concrete proof of its reality. In short, what the spatial constructions of the supernatural created was a liminal space between scepticism and superstition in which the observer cannot settle on ‘a positive act of either acceptance or rejection’ but instead hesitates between the two to adopt an ‘agnostic position regarding the supernatural’ (Carter 3). Importantly, this hesitation is not only sustained and actively encouraged by the most successful Gothic novels, but has come to somewhat define the genre itself. Drawing upon Todorov’s definition of the fantastic, in which the reader must ‘hesitate between a natural and a supernatural explanation of the events described’ (33), Carter draws attention to the marked hesitation present in ‘the typical Gothic novel’ that ‘leaves the reality of its supernatural events in doubt for most of the story, in the characters’ perception and often in the reader’s’ (6-7).

Indeed, ‘No other form of writing or theatre is as insistent as Gothic on juxtaposing potential revolution and possible reaction’ – about such things as ‘the physical versus the metaphysical, and abnormal versus normal psychology – and leaving both extremes sharply before us and far less resolved than the conventional endings in most of these works claim them to be’ (Hogle 13). It is striking that the Gothic texts, which are mediated through, and concerned so much with, the eighteenth-century rationalist perspective on the supernatural, manage to create such a profound sense of the numinous in their texts, often specifically over and against such rational doubt and resistance to the supernatural as a reality. That most of the Gothic texts can be considered fantastic, in that they adopt an ambiguous position when considering the ontological reality of the supernatural, suggests that for readers of Gothic texts in the eighteenth century, the supernatural was not considered a phenomenon universally accepted or denied, but one over which uncertainty and hesitation must linger. It is in this respect that Gothic texts allowed eighteenth-century readers a way to encounter and think about the supernatural. As Carter suggests, ‘all stories of the fantastic, marvellous, and uncanny (even

goes on to praise Radcliffe’s ability to keep the reader ‘upon the very edge and confines of the world of spirits’ before her ‘mysterious terrors’ are ‘ingeniously explained by familiar causes’ (361).

the mediocre ones) are read because the problems faced by their characters touch, however obliquely, upon problems faced by their readers' (3). These real-life problems were certainly in large part, how to think about the supernatural and what it meant for the natural world – in short, what it meant for the very substance of the world, its spatial organisation and the nature of reality, not to mention its significant spiritual ramifications.

One of the ways many Gothic novels created this liminal space of hesitation and ambiguity was through the use of mediated narrative and limited perspective (Carter 3). According to Aguirre, 'Gothic narrative forms such as the concentric series of stories-within-stories or the labyrinth motif 'destabilise assumptions as to the physical, ontological, or moral order of the cosmos' ('Geometries' 6). Likewise, pronounced 'interest in testimony, documentation and evidential proof leads to narrative forms conducive to the exploration of ambiguities in the factual or moral status of strange events' (Carter 17). As Punter and Byron suggest, 'in many ways...the Gothic is grounded on the terrain of hallucination': 'it is a mode within which we are frequently unsure of the reliability of the narrator's perceptions, and thus of the extent to which we as readers are enjoined to participate in them or to retain a critical distance' (293). The focus on mediated narrative and the presenting and questioning of evidence makes these less tales of the supernatural and more narratives about the question of the reality of the supernatural: a question that directly implicates the reader. Yet the way these texts choose to represent the supernatural, often in terms of liminal space, perpetually suspends judgement, forcing an ambiguous position on the reality of the supernatural. Gothic texts therefore paradoxically reflect both the eighteenth-century desire for proof of the supernatural, and their desire to reject the notion completely.

This is the case even (or especially) in those Gothic novels that follow Ann Radcliffe's model of the 'explained supernatural' in which the supernatural events are explained away as natural phenomena by the end of the narrative.⁴² Manlove suggests that 'those Gothic novels in which the supernatural is revealed to be some merely natural phenomenon...are really no different in kind from those which offer no such explanation, for in both the purpose is simply to stimulate the reader's unconscious terrors' (*Modern Fantasy* 6). Indeed, despite their 'explained' endings, Radcliffe's novels deliberately 'sustain the atmosphere of the fantastic

⁴² Various reasons have been proposed for Radcliffe's 'explained supernatural', and the general critical belief that it limits her achieving the potential of the Gothic form. While many take the line that Radcliffe, as an Enlightened woman, needed to dissociate herself from the indulgence of common superstition, Mayhew provides an interesting perspective by focusing on Radcliffe's reclusive lifestyle, her removal from society (which was every bit indulging in the entertainment of ghosts), and her education in the values of her Latitudinarian Anglican parents to explain her views on the supernatural (273-301).

for most of the duration of the narrative': 'As the plot unfolds, ...characters seriously entertain the idea of the supernatural, suspect the presence of ghosts, and debate the reality of the spiritual world' (Carter 23). As Howard notes, not only are 'explanations of supernatural events...frequently withheld for many chapters,' but "'the strange luxury of artificial terror" in fact depends on this device' (xiv). Indeed, 'by the time natural causes are uncovered, the supernatural suggestions have already done their work' (Carter 45). As Talfourd remarked in 1824, 'even when she has dissolved mystery after mystery, and abjured spell after spell, the impression survives' ('Memoir' 116-7). The effect of these supernatural suggestions is to 'induce both protagonists and readers to consider the possible existence of the unseen world; a precise decision about the status of that world need not be reached' (Carter 45).

This kind of hesitation and uncertainty regarding the supernatural derived specifically from limited perspective and restricted vision was actively fostered by the Gothic writers themselves and reflects the greater public attitude toward the human limitations in considering the mysteries of 'the other world'. In a letter to C. Smyth on the 3rd August 1794, Anna Seward reflects upon Radcliffe's technique in *Udolpho* of describing 'the object behind the mysterious veil...at first only by saying what it is not', a method of negative description which serves to highlight more the uncomfortable ignorance of the protagonist and reader when it comes to matters supernatural, than any positive description that might anchor a supernatural being in empirical terms.⁴³ Likewise, when discussing *Macbeth*'s witches in 1826, Radcliffe emphasises the liminal spatial status that must be maintained in successful supernatural descriptions when she notes that 'The wild attire, the look *not of this earth*, are essential traits of supernatural agents'.⁴⁴ Radcliffe's ideas were shared by Sir Walter Scott, who wrote in 1811 that 'A mysterious obscurity seems congenial at least, if not essential, to our ideas of disembodied spirits' ('Introduction' 327). Indeed, the difference between a concrete description of the supernatural and one that induced uncertainty and hesitation was often posited as an important aesthetic difference between the literature of terror (generally assigned to the Radcliffe school of Gothic novels) and the literature of horror (generally assigned to the M. G. Lewis 'Monk' school of writing). The former was a means by which to achieve the kind of sublimity that Burke championed, and so was posited as a defence of high Gothic literature, while the latter indulged in vulgar taste and so justified the heavy critical vilification that was often waged indiscriminately against the Gothic novels in general. In her 1826 essay 'On the Supernatural in Poetry', Radcliffe writes:

⁴³ Anna Seward, 'Letter to C. Smyth 3 August 1794' *The Letters of Anna Seward*. Vol. 3. Edinburgh, 1811. 389-90.

⁴⁴ Ann Radcliffe, 'On the Supernatural in Poetry' *New Monthly Magazine* 16 (1826): 145-52.

Terror and horror are so far opposite, that the first expands the soul, and awakens the faculties to a high degree of life; the other contracts, freezes, and nearly annihilates them. I apprehend, that neither Shakespeare nor Milton by their fictions, nor Mr. Burke by his reasoning, anywhere looked to positive horror as a source of the sublime, though they all agree that terror is a very high one; and where lies the great difference between horror and terror but in the uncertainty and obscurity, that accompany the [latter], respecting the dreaded evil?' (150)

This passage is particularly interesting when compared with another similar passage by the celebrated Romantic poet S. T. Coleridge, who, when discussing Lewis's *Monk*, wrote in decidedly liminal language that the task of the novelist should be 'to trace the nice boundaries, beyond which terror and sympathy are deserted by the pleasurable emotions, - to reach those limits, yet never to pass them'.⁴⁵ For Coleridge, a good author treads the liminal space between emotions, teasing horror (via suggestions of the world beyond that limit – the supernatural) without indulging it completely. Suggestions of the supernatural allow pleasurable, even sublime experiences, while 'figures that shock the imagination, and narratives that mangle the feelings, rarely discover *genius*, and always betray a low and vulgar *taste*.' This similarity of approach between the two writers, the one considered the most successful and influential of the Gothic novelists (in T. J. Horsley Curties's words, '*Udolpho*'s unrivalled Foundress' [cited in Norton 308]), and the other the father-figure of the Romantics, is an important one in the context of contemporary and recent criticism that seeks to separate these two categories into a binary of high and low culture.⁴⁶ Further, it emphasises the importance that was placed upon aesthetic values of the imagination and the way that the imagination and higher orders of thinking may be stimulated by a consideration of the limits of the known world – by tracing the liminal boundaries between the natural and supernatural worlds.

Yet more than merely evoking uncertainties over the physical reality of supernatural beings, British Gothic novels reveal a deeper preoccupation with the nature of space and its limits. If Gothic texts are primarily about the encounter with the supernatural, then it is an encounter typically styled in terms of space.⁴⁷ More specifically, Gothic is a literature intimately concerned with limits, borders, and the events that occur in the liminal space between the natural and supernatural worlds, or as Carter suggests, 'human perception of events at the

⁴⁵ 'Lewis's Romance of the Monk' *Critical Review* 19 (1797): 194-8.

⁴⁶ See Chapter Three for a more detailed discussion of this subject.

⁴⁷ While some critics point out that Gothic literature need not necessarily contain supernatural elements, but simply 'the numinous' or uncanny, it may still be observed that analyses of texts that privilege a psychological, uncanny, sexual, political or other reading in preference to the supernatural should still encounter this primary engagement with the exercise of the protagonist's will against various kinds of space and their inherent powers – whether this space be mental, political or gendered space.

boundary between nature and supernatural' (3). Despite the importance of space and spatial theories in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century engagement with the supernatural, and despite the heavy reliance on space and spatial metaphors in the majority of Gothic novels, this area has been largely critically overlooked, perhaps in favour of more abstract psychological, gendered, cultural or social theories, which has left a gap in our understanding of the way the eighteenth century viewed itself, its literature and its place in the world. While Gothic buildings have attracted criticism of sublimity or symbolic readings, little critical attention has been afforded to the actual spaces within Gothic fiction as physical structures.⁴⁸ Manuel Aguirre is one of the few critics in recent years who aims to bridge this gap. He calls the 'untilled field of study' that is 'the use of space by Gothic writers' surprising, and urges that 'we need to tackle the construction of physical and narrative space' 'because the tangibility of place is a central preoccupation of Gothic, and has remained important to the horror genre even after Gothic was superseded by the more psychology-oriented horror fiction favoured by the Victorians' ('Geometries' 1-2). While Aguirre is forging important inroads into this untilled yet rich field of study, there are still important additions that need to be made. In his study, Aguirre does not specifically address the relationship between the Gothic texts' evocation of liminal space and their representation of the supernatural, nor does he address the way in which this spatial construction itself elicits a perpetually ambiguous 'betwixt-and-between' position regarding the reality of the supernatural. In order to gain the most accurate insight into the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century mentality, a study of the Gothic novels' preoccupation with space must be situated within the Gothic's equal obsession with the supernatural. Moreover, it must acknowledge that for the Gothic and for the eighteenth-century public, the notions of the supernatural and liminal or 'beyond' spaces were inextricable. These subjects are explored in the next chapter.

⁴⁸ The importance of space in the Gothic novel is occasionally implicit in feminist readings such as Ellis's *The Contested Castle* which sees 'the Gothic novel as an increasingly insistent critique of the ideology of separate spheres' and the repeated themes of usurpation, entrapment and escape from the castle – at once a domestic sanctuary, "home", and a site of power (Ellis xv). Though Ellis is implicitly acknowledging the importance of liminal space within Gothic novels, she avoids linking this with the specifically supernatural elements of the narrative or the wider context of investigation into supernatural spaces within which the Gothic novels were produced.

THE GOTHIC AESTHETIC: SPACE & THE SUPERNATURAL IN THE GOTHIC NOVELS & BEYOND

There is perhaps no other kind of literature than Gothic fiction (other than perhaps its descendant, science fiction) in which setting and space are so important or indicative of the kind of narrative one can expect to encounter. In Walpole's foreboding and labyrinthine *Castle of Otranto*, Sophia Lee's *The Recess* with 'its central image of the recess in a ruined medieval abbey' (Howard x) and Radcliffe's 'gloomy and mysterious recesses of the castle' *Udolpho* (240), we can observe an explicit privileging of space and physical setting as the focus of the text. This fundamental concern with place and space is emphasised by the titles of many Gothic works (which depart from the dominant practice of eponymous titling of other early novels), from the 'original' *Castle of Otranto* in 1764, to Charlotte Smith's *Emmeline, the Orphan of the Castle* (1788) and *Ethelinda, or the Recluse of the Lake* (1789), Ann Radcliffe's *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* (1789), *The Romance of the Forest* (1791) and *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), Eliza Parson's *Castle of Wolfenbach: A German Story* (1793) and Matthew Lewis's *The Castle Spectre* (1798), to name but a few published before the turn of the century. As the majority of these titles indicate, 'if there is such a thing as a general topography of the Gothic, then its central motif is the castle' (Punter and Byron 259) – that gloomy, looming edifice, which, according to Charlotte Smith, 'frown(s) in almost every modern novel' (iii).¹

But what exactly is it about castles, or other traditionally Gothic landscapes such as abbeys, mountains and graveyards, that makes them so redolent of the kind of supernatural terrors that Gothic novels are concerned with? The answer is simply that Gothic spaces are by nature liminal spaces: castles, abbeys, graveyards and mountainous regions are liminal sites straddling the boundary between ancient and modern, past and present, prison and refuge, and they exist in the same way, as liminal sites in which the natural and supernatural worlds

¹ In a satirical letter of advice to would-be authors of the Gothic, one writer for the *Monthly Magazine* in 1797 suggested: 'In the first place, then, trembling reader, I would advise you to construct an *old* castle, *formerly* of great magnitude and extent, built in the Gothic manner, with a great number of hanging towers, turrets, and pinnacles. One half, at least of it must be in ruins; dreadful chasms and gaping crevices must be hid only by the clinging ivy; the doors must be so old, and so little used to open, as to grate tremendously on the hinges; and there must be in every passage an echo, and as many reverberations as there are partitions (4:21 [August 1797]: 102-4, p. 103).

overlap and collide. Gothic novels are primarily about the exercising of the protagonists' will within and against these dark, shadowy, richly evocative liminal spaces and the borderland phenomena that they produce – ghosts, memories, dreams and visions that straddle the boundaries between the waking and sleeping worlds, reality and fantasy, past and present, present and future, and most importantly, natural and supernatural.

Varnado argues that Gothic castles parallel the ancient temples in their mixing of 'sacred and profane' spaces to essentially become liminal spaces – 'halfway houses' between Heaven and Earth, or in other words, between the natural and supernatural worlds: 'The darkness, silence, and sublimity of such structures, lit by an occasional glimmer of light, suggest by analogy the realm of existence that lies hidden behind the world of material reality' (32-3). Ruined castles in particular impose 'the triumph of chaos over order' (Sadlier cited in Varma 218), and, by extension, the terrible power of the chaotic and infinite vastness of the universe against the ordered, rationalistic materialism of the natural Enlightenment world. Likewise, mountains 'are loaded with liminal connotations in myth and folktale, where they constitute, as Mircea Eliade tells us in *Le mythe de l'éternel retour* (1945) – axes that join the human world to the world above and below' (Aguirre 'Geometries' 5). Significantly, this liminal status of Gothic spaces means that they 'are not only thresholds into the Numinous, but themselves numinous territory' – 'The threshold is, as Victor Turner puts it, "a place that is not a place"...it is already that which it delimits and isolates...the Other takes over and colonizes its own frontiers' (4). As Aguirre points out, 'the distinction between threshold and Other space may be an equivocal, if not a spurious one: *for the threshold is a part of the Other*' (5).

In this way, castles, mountains and other Gothic settings become liminal spaces, at times even gateways, between the natural and the supernatural worlds, where both realms overlap and collide. 'In the context of the castle, nothing is what it seems; even commonly accepted definitions of the human and the non-human, the natural and the supernatural, drop away like the rotting fortifications themselves' (Punter and Byron 259-60). Indeed, the castle is persistently dualistic: natural and supernatural, physical and psychological, uncanny and domestic. 'The castle is a labyrinth, a maze, a site of secrets. It is also, paradoxically, a site of domesticity, where ordinary life carries on even while accompanied by the most extraordinary and inexplicable of events' (261). It is simultaneously a place of refuge and a prison, and most importantly, it 'has to do with the map, and with the failure of the map; it figures loss of direction, the impossibility of imposing one's own sense of place on an alien world' (262). In other words, the failure of the map is the failure of human scientific and empirical knowledge

at the frontier, the limit between the natural and supernatural worlds. This refusal of the Gothic space to be classified, charted, navigated and mapped is significant in the face of the late-eighteenth-century engagement with the supernatural as ‘the other world’, an unknowable and immeasurable space in which time and perception are both distorted. As Punter and Byron explain, this sense of the immense, the immeasurable and the unknowable is conveyed in Gothic fiction in many ways that have become the stock-in-trade of the Gothic novelist, from the endlessly repeating corridors, to the labyrinthine hall of mirrors, to the ghost that becomes another version of self (262). Threatening us with ‘measureless boundaries’, ‘the castle represents desubjectification: within its walls one may be “subjected” to a force that is utterly resistant to the individual’s attempts to impose his or her own order’ (262).² As Aguirre explains, ‘this *liminalization* of ordinary space deprives it of solidity, making it less (or more) than real, placing it in between brackets, as it were. Hence both its numinosity and its terror’ (‘Geometries’ 14).

It is this threat to the unity of the world and the self that allows the Gothic spaces to elicit such terror and which, consequently, constitutes their source of the sublime. Edmund Burke’s 1757 *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* confines the ‘sublime (traditionally the “grand style”, literally a “rising from beneath a threshold”) to “whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain, and danger”’ (Hogle 14). ‘Sublimity is thus aroused for Burke and then Walpole by linguistic or artistic expansions into “Vastness” or “Infinity” or even “notions of ghosts or goblins” (clearly expatiations into the boundless) because they terrifyingly threaten the annihilation of the self’ (Hogle 14).

The Gothic universe:

can be said to postulate two zones: on the one hand, the human domain of rationality and intelligible events; on the other hand, the world of the sublime, terrifying, chaotic Numinous which transcends human reason... These are separated by some manner of threshold, and plots invariably involve movement from one site to the other – a movement which, most often, is presented as a transgression, a violation of boundaries. (Aguirre ‘Geometries’ 2-3)

This threshold between the natural and supernatural worlds is frequently symbolised by a veil, a popular motif in fairy folklore, and by doors, walls, locks and passages (themselves often liminally placed underground – both within the earth and yet apart from it). According to Aguirre, veils, doors and walls are middle elements that, ‘being no proper space’ themselves,

² See also Fino’s *The Haunted Castle*, and Shelden’s ‘Jamesian Gothicism: The Haunted Castle of the Mind’.

bring 'two spaces into contact even as' they 'separate them' (4). While Aguirre does not specifically address the supernatural significance of such liminal constructions, Carter suggests that the Gothic protagonist 'views the true nature of the universe as hidden by a veil, a metaphor prominent in many Gothic novels. What is veiled may be futurity, evil, the supernatural, or the absence of the supernatural. Ghostly visitations allure because they seem to promise a lifting of the veil' (36). As a letter to the Editor published in the *Monthly Magazine* in August 1797 suggested, in most Gothic novels:

the principle incidents must be carried on in *subterraneous* passages. These, in general, wind round the whole extent of the building; but that is not very material, as the heroine never goes through above half without meeting with a door, which she has neither strength nor resolution to open, although she has found a rusty key, very happily fitted to as rusty a lock, and would give the world to know what it leads to, and yet she can give no reason for her curiosity.³

The reason behind the heroine's curiosity is usually left unexplained and her curiosity was usually taken for granted as a common feature of the Gothic heroine (a feature that Austen would parody in *Northanger Abbey*). At its core however, the Gothic heroine exhibits and exemplifies for the reader a yearning to know what lies behind the veil, past the door, beyond the limit: in essence, what lies 'on the other side'. This yearning is both spiritual and physical, as the dark passages, obscuring veils and creaking doors often hint to the protagonist a fleeting glimpse of the supernatural. The protagonist's insatiable and yet seemingly irrational curiosity, which, next to the setting, might be considered one of the most defining characteristics of the Gothic novels, thus mirror the reader's general curiosity about the supernatural and its intersections with the natural world. As Carter and others have suggested, the Gothic novels thus becomes a way to satisfy this curiosity: to see real fears and hesitations engendered by supernatural phenomena represented upon the page.

As examples, we might take two of the most famous and influential Gothic novels of the time: Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, which, published in 1764, is 'universally recognised as the first Gothic novel' (Carter 10) and paved the way for a host of imitators; and Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, the novel that 'brought the Gothic romance into ascendancy' and saw it rise to unprecedented heights of both popularity and critical acclaim (Howard vii). Both were radically pioneering novels and became heavily influential models for later writers, and both demonstrate the Gothic's particular preoccupation with the liminal spaces between the natural and supernatural worlds.

³ 'Letter to the Editor' *Monthly Magazine* 4:21 (August 1797): 102-4, p. 104.

Walpole's 1764 *Otranto* set the example of the foreboding castle, subterranean passages and locked doors with a pervasive fear of ghosts and ghouls inhabiting these dark recesses.⁴ Varma argues that 'it is the Castle itself' that forms 'the focal point of Walpole's romance' (57). With its 'antique courts and ruined turrets, deserted and haunted chambers where hang age-old tapestries; its grated windows that exclude the light; its dark, eerie galleries' and 'its dark, machicolated and sullen towers set high upon some precipice of the Apennines frowning upon the valleys below,...the haunted castle forms the stage-setting; while its accessory properties powerfully seize the imagination' (Varma 57). Within the entire narrative, the castle of Otranto represents a liminal space of shifting meaning: it is at once a site of imprisonment with locked gates and guarded courts– the physical representation of Manfred's overbearing desire to exert his will upon both Isabella and the natural world – and yet it is also a counterspace as it is within these very walls of imprisonment that Manfred's will is challenged and ultimately undone. Significantly, this undoing is achieved by the supernatural world, and it is the meeting between the natural and the supernatural worlds within the liminal space of the castle, and the effect this confrontation has upon the castle's inhabitants, that forms the central premise of the narrative. While Manfred, the 'usurper of the principality of Otranto' (94), seeks to control the castle and imprison Isabella for his own means, he is constantly thwarted by the influence of the supernatural world, which moves increasingly actively to bring about the strange prophecy 'That the castle and lordship of Otranto should pass from the present family, whenever the real owner should be grown too large to inhabit it' (51).

This movement is characterised in an inward direction: as Isabella and the servants seek to leave the castle for the safety of the outside world, the supernatural moves inward, invading the castle and eventually repossessing it entirely, turning the castle from Manfred's fort of feudal power into a liminal space where power itself is contested. The first act is obviously the giant helmet that kills Manfred's son, but the supernatural continues to increase its presence and influence throughout the castle as it moves in from the margins to take possession. As Manfred makes to seize Isabella, and thus steps outside the bounds of proper conduct, his attempt is thwarted by the sudden ghostly animation of a portrait on the wall, which in the moonlight that 'gleamed in at the opposite casement,' 'uttered a deep sigh and heaved its breast' before descending upon the floor 'with a grave and melancholy air' (59-60). 'Do I dream? Cried Manfred, returning, or are the devils themselves in league against me?

⁴ Horace Walpole. *The Castle of Otranto*. Ed. Jacqueline Howard. London: Penguin Books, 2001. All subsequent references are to this edition, hereby given by page numbers within the text.

Speak, infernal spectre!’ (59). Manfred is aware of the attempt of the supernatural to undermine his own castle, exclaiming, ‘Talk not to me of necromancers; I tell you she must be in the castle; I will find her in spite of enchantment’ (64) and he acknowledges that the infiltration of the castle by the supernatural has been the means of her escape: ‘O blundering fools! cried Manfred: and in the mean time she has made her escape, because you were afraid of goblins!’ (68).

It is the increasingly liminal state of the castle as the supernatural moves inward that allows Isabella to almost literally slip through the cracks in the walls that Manfred would imprison her within. Using the ghostly portrait’s distraction, she seeks escape from ‘the pursuit’ Manfred ‘would infallibly make throughout the castle’ by descending into the castle’s own liminal spaces – those undefined in-between spaces that represent the weaknesses in Manfred’s power: ‘The lower part of the castle was hollowed into several intricate cloisters’ and beyond this, though ‘it was not easy for one under so much anxiety to find the door that opened into the cavern,’ Isabella enters ‘a subterraneous passage which led from the vaults of the castle to the church of saint Nicholas’ (61). As well as straddling a subterranean threshold both within the earth and yet apart from it, this ‘secret passage’ is also a liminal space between the castle (and the feudal, ‘natural’ or ‘profane’ power it represents), and the numinous or ‘sacred’ world, represented by the church of saint Nicholas, in which, Isabella believes, ‘Manfred’s violence would not dare to profane the sacredness of the place’ (61). As Isabella moves from the space of the castle toward the space of the church, she thus traces the liminal threshold between the profane and sacred. To put it another way, Isabella is taking advantage of the same kind of liminal spaces that the supernatural utilises to enter the castle and undermine its authority: as the supernatural is moving in towards the castle centre, Isabella escapes Manfred’s clutches by tracing in reverse the liminal threshold that the supernatural has created.

The description of this ‘secret passage’ and its liminal relationship with the notion of the ‘otherworldly’ clearly strikes the first chord for what would later become a frequently repeated Gothic trope:

An awful silence reigned throughout those subterraneous regions, except now and then some blasts of wind that shook the doors as she passed, and which grating on the rusty hinges were re-echoed through that long labyrinth of darkness. Every murmur struck her with new terror; - yet more she dreaded to hear the wrathful voice of Manfred urging his domestics to pursue her. (61)

These passages, with their associations with ghosts, represent the aid that liminal supernatural space provides for Isabella in the same way that the later caverns do: combining several liminal landscape features, these caverns lie ‘Yonder, behind that forest to the east’ in ‘a chain of rocks, hollowed into a labyrinth of caverns that reach to the sea-coast’ (107). Unsurprisingly, given their liminal status, these caves ‘were now reported round the country to be haunted by evil spirits’ (108). Yet it is within these liminal ‘haunted’ spaces that Isabella is reunited with both Theodore and her father.

As the supernatural invades the castle, the associations between liminal spaces and supernatural visions magnify in corporeality and terror. One of the most terrifying scenes likewise occurs via the crossing of thresholds and thus the blurring of boundaries between the natural and supernatural worlds. Towards the end of the narrative, Isabella’s father, the marquis, traverses several liminal spaces, crossing the open door into the liminal space of the oratory – a place of ritual designed to mediate between the natural and supernatural worlds – to encounter perhaps the most terrible ghost of the entire narrative:

The door was ajar; the evening gloomy and overcast. Pushing open the door gently, he saw a person kneeling before the altar. As he approached nearer, it seemed not a woman, but one in a long woollen weed, whose back was towards him...And then the figure, turning slowly round, discovered to Frederic the fleshless jaws and empty sockets of a skeleton, wrapt in a hermit’s cowl. (139)

One of the novel’s rare occurrences of a physically embodied ghost (and by which the novel might be seen to move beyond the boundaries of mild terror into the realm of horror), it is this kind of vision, induced by the crossing of thresholds from natural into supernatural space that most terrifies the superstitious servants of the castle, who beg for Manfred to ‘send for the chaplain and have the castle exorcised, for, for certain, it is enchanted’ (69). In a particularly telling dialogue, after having crossed such a threshold themselves to witness a terrifying ‘giant’ in the castle galleries, the servants Diego and Jaquez express regret at moving beyond the threshold to witness what lies there – both literally behind the door and implicitly behind the veil between the natural and supernatural worlds: ‘Would to heaven that we had not’ opened the door, laments Jaquez. ‘If ever I open a door that is shut again –’ (69).

This series of doors, passages, stairways and thresholds creates for *Otranto* a privileging of threshold spaces that ‘actually questions the possibility of quantification, of finiteness, and therefore of cognoscibility; in effect, it consecrates “mystery” at the heart of the rationalist world’ (Aguirre ‘Geometries’ 13). In this way, *Otranto* demonstrates the way that Gothic

texts take on the structure of endlessly-repeating fractals where ‘the closer one comes to the “frontier” between it and the “outside”,...the more complex the structure of this frontier is shown to be, and the more it belies the appearance of a spatially finite set’ (12). This destabilisation of both natural space and rationalist thinking strengthens the hesitation that is induced at both a character and reader level within the text. Throughout the narrative, the reality of the supernatural is simultaneously accepted and rejected and the principal characters consider these supernatural events as both quite literally real, and also as psychological fancies. Diego’s vision of the giant in the gallery is treated with such ambiguity by Hippolita ‘who no more than Manfred doubted the reality of the vision, yet affected to treat it as a delirium of the servant’ and assured Manfred ‘that the vision of the gigantic leg and foot was all a fable; and no doubt an impression made by fear, and the dark and dismal hour of the night, on the minds of his servants’ (Walpole 71). At this, ‘Manfred, though persuaded, like his wife, that the vision had been no work of fancy, recovered a little from the tempest of mind into which so many strange events had thrown him’ (71). Likewise, when Bianca sees ‘upon the uppermost banister of the great stairs a hand in armour’ (137), Manfred asks ‘Can your highness listen...to the delirium of a silly wench, who has heard stories of apparitions until she believes them? This is more than fancy, said the marquis; her terror is too natural and too strongly impressed to be the work of imagination’ (136). Later, when Manfred takes Theodore for the ghost of Alphonso, he asks ‘dost thou not see him? Can it be my brain’s delirium?’ (116). This simultaneous acceptance and rejection of the supernatural – offering with one hand what it takes away with the other – reflects the greater eighteenth-century hesitation that was based upon the supernatural’s situation within a unique liminal space. Walpole emphasises this point when Manfred defends his mistaken spectral vision by stating ‘If beings from another world...have power to impress my mind with awe, it is more than living man can do’ (118).

Interestingly, the importance of the relationship between the supernatural and the liminal space it makes of the castle as it moves inward to repossess it is emphasised in the climax of the narrative. Mistaking Matilda for Isabella in the church, Manfred mortally wounds her – an act that will ultimately bring about his downfall. While the priest Jerome comforts the mortally wounded Matilda ‘with discourses of heaven,’ Matilda’s ‘passage to immortality’ – to the supernatural realm – is traced in the reverse direction of Isabella’s flight from the castle into the natural world (which was aided by the increasing possession of the castle by the supernatural). While Isabella follows subterranean passages from castle to church, the dying Matilda is carried in the opposite direction, from the church to the castle, in the same direction

that the supernatural moved as it invaded the castle, where, in the liminal space of the supernaturally possessed castle, she finally expires, and presumably, now in the numinous space of the possessed castle, achieves her 'passage to immortality' (143). Significantly, it is Matilda's passing that strikes the final blow in Otranto's prophecy. The supernatural realm, claiming Matilda for its own, in addition to Manfred's son Conrad, takes full possession of the castle in order to redress the usurpation of it from the heirs of Alphonso. At the height of the moon, and at the instant Manfred learns of his daughter's death, 'A clap of thunder...shook the castle to its foundations; the earth rocked, and the clank of more than mortal armour was heard behind....The moment Theodore appeared, the walls of the castle behind Manfred were thrown down with a mighty force, and the form of Alphonso, dilated to an immense magnitude, appeared in the centre of the ruins' to reveal Theodore as his true heir (145). The movement of the supernatural inward from the margins, and hence the repossession by it of the castle are now complete.

Otranto's emphasis on liminal spaces and their perceived relationship with the supernatural world was greatly expanded by Radcliffe in the 1790s, who took many of Walpole's elements, particularly his emphasis on the liminal spaces of the 'Gothic setting' and the suspenseful hesitation in the encounter with the supernatural, and combined them with greater psychological reality and character description to lend them an air of authenticity that had a profound affect upon the many readers who devoured her works. *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, her most popular work, 'with its unprecedented ability to maintain suspense, teasing its readers with suggestions of the spectral, and its poetic descriptions of picturesque and sublime scenery,...became the most popular novel of its author's time,' and since then, 'has been continuously in print' (Howard vii, xxv). Further, Radcliffe's work is significant as part of the Gothic tradition because, as Howard explains, her 'influence on later novelists was immeasurable' and her work 'inspired a host of imitators whose Gothic romances dominated circulating libraries for the next decade' (xxiv).

Like *Otranto*, *Udolpho*'s principle action is centred around the foreboding castle from which the novel takes its name. The liminal space of the castle Udolpho is emphasized when Emily first encounters it during 'twilight', the liminal phase between day and night:

though it was now lighted up by the setting sun, the gothic greatness of its features, and its mouldering walls of dark grey stone, rendered it a gloomy and sublime object. As she gazed, the light died away on its walls...silent, lonely and sublime, it seemed to stand the sovereign of the scene, and to frown defiance on all, who dared to invade

its solitary reign. As the twilight deepened, its features became more awful in obscurity, and Emily continued to gaze, till its clustering towers were alone seen, rising over the tops of the woods, beneath whose thick shade the carriages soon after began to ascend. (216)⁵

As well as privileging a consideration of space and its limits, and emphasising the importance of liminal states and their relationship to these spaces, Emily's description of the castle emphasises the importance of perception and the gaze. The castle fades from Emily's view – is withdrawn from reach – just as the implied ghosts and mysteries of the castle will elude her sight and thus her empirical knowledge of their reality. The symbolism is obvious in this passage: as Emily moves away from her ordered and normal lifestyle, from the 'light' of rational civilization, towards the limits of the natural world, through dark forest and tall mountains to the dark, shadowy regions beyond, the light dies away, leaving her in the shadow of the liminal world represented by the castle. For Varnado, 'Passages such as this make evident why the "haunted castle" was to become the unifying ideogram of Gothic literature' (32). In '*Udolpho* the feeling of sacred space blends with a sense of the preternatural' (Varnado 33), and reflects Rudolf Otto's assertion that due to its sublimity and relationship with 'primitive magic', Gothic architecture 'appears as the most numinous of all types of art' (67).

Likewise, Aguirre examines the narrative techniques of Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian* in which the method of the protagonist's attempted escape from the confines of the convent forms 'a structure which elicits the experience of the Numinous. It suspends the casual order; it defers the attainment of human purposes and renders action purposeless; it places individuals in the no-man's land of an indefinitely extended threshold, a phantom territory which intrudes between action and result, between cause and effect, thus keeping the fugitives in a permanent betwixt-and-between condition' ('Geometries' 10). Like *Otranto*, in *The Italian*, 'a numinous environment is created by this multiplication of thresholds', while 'this environment is presented as terrifying because it does violence to the expected order of things, makes action seem futile and escape impossible, and seems associated with a vast inhuman power for obstruction and control' (10). This technique is perhaps nowhere more obvious and potentially confusing and terrifying than in Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*.⁶ 'Distance is lengthened through partition, thresholds multiply, each move creates ripples which generate new obstacles and dangers to be overcome by further (or prior) moves, the whole threatening

⁵ Ann Radcliffe. *The Mysteries of Udolpho: A Romance*. Ed. Jacqueline Howard. London: Penguin Books, 2001. All subsequent references are to this edition, hereby given by page numbers within the text.

⁶ See Chapter Six.

to stretch advance ad infinitum, to indefinitely frustrate it, or to consume it in an inward whorl' (13). 'The technique whereby physical or figurative space is endlessly fragmented and so seems both to repeat itself and to stall resolution is not restricted to *The Italian*: almost every major Gothic author (Walpole, Beckford, Lee, Lewis, Godwin, Mary Shelley, Maturin, Hogg) uses it in his or her own way' (13).

THE GOTHIC AESTHETIC

That the Gothic's persistent location of the supernatural within alternative, liminal spaces allowed it to remain beyond the scepticism of detractors and so itself occupy a liminal position between faith and scepticism in the public imagination, and that it was received with an enthusiasm and curiosity that was both widespread and prodigious, is evidenced by the fact that the Gothic novels that were steadily growing in popularity in the 1790s did not emerge as spontaneously as the ghosts they championed, but were bound up within a much larger intellectual and aesthetic process that extended far beyond the bounds of literature to encompass a widespread multi- and interdisciplinary investigation into the nature and spaces of the supernatural.

Much like the term 'fantasy', the 'Gothic' has been subject to increasingly 'intense and invigorating debate' in recent years (Punter and Byron xiv). Whether as a genre, a mode, a subset of Romanticism, or any of the other many labels applied to it, 'the gothic remains a notoriously difficult field to define' (xviii). Its most common association is with the so-called 'Gothic novels' that were being produced toward the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. However, such an understanding of Gothic is limited and fails to account for the widespread and multifarious manifestations of the Gothic during these times from novels, pamphlets and plays to science, philosophy and even politics. In addition to the numerous contextual evidence that points toward the widespread public interest in the supernatural however, several critics provide more useful ways of conceiving the Gothic, where it can be seen less as a literary genre or mode, and more as an aesthetic that was manifested in many different forms. In his insightful challenge to traditional ways of viewing the Gothic, Gamer begins with Miles's suggestion that 'an understanding of Gothic writing [as narrative] is misconceived. We should not understand Gothic as a set of prose conventions, however flexible, but as a discursive site crossing the genres' (3). Gamer takes

this idea further, arguing that ‘by nature heterogeneous, gothic texts regularly contain multiple modes of writing, shifting from novelistic prose into poetry, inset oral narratives, didactic fables, or pantomimic and dramatic spectacles’ (3-4). He argues that, if the Gothic can be called a site crossing the genres, ‘it is a site that *moves*, and that must be defined in part by its ability to transplant itself *across* forms and media: from narrative into dramatic and poetic modes, and from textual into visual and aural media’ (4).

Similarly, it is important to remember that ‘unlike most twentieth-century commentators, the readers of gothic literature in the 1790s considered it neither exclusively a kind of fiction nor even necessarily a narrative mode’ (3). According to Botting, ‘the ambivalence of “Gothic”...appears within eighteenth-century aesthetic criticism, crossing boundaries and disrupting categories as much as it serves to preserve them’ (8).⁷ Therefore, the Gothic should be defined ‘neither as a mode nor as a kind of fiction (the “gothic novel”) but as an aesthetic’ (Gamer 4). In this way, understanding the Gothic as a widespread cultural aesthetic rather than a literary genre or mode with fixed conventions, allows for a more historically accurate and culturally insightful view of the multifarious ways the supernatural was expressed, investigated and understood in the eighteenth century.

An approach that seeks to historicise the reception of the Gothic ‘is particularly important to understanding genre in late-eighteenth-century Britain, a culture in which most writers were not only readers but also reviewers for a periodical industry expanding at rates that rival gothic even at the height of its popularity’ (Gamer 8). ‘Part of what caused readers and reviewers to separate gothic from other kinds of writing were its sudden incursions after 1794 into poetic and dramatic realms’, which meant that, by the 1800s, readers ‘grouped together texts as disparate as James Boaden’s dramas, Matthew Lewis’s ballads, and Charlotte Dacre’s fiction under a single categorical umbrella’ (3). Indeed, far from appearing solely in the Gothic novels that were emerging at the time, and which have received increasing critical attention since the 1990s, the rise of the supernatural at this time should best be understood as

⁷ See Clery’s ‘The Genesis of Gothic Fiction’ 21-39 for an analysis of the term Gothic in relation to its historical use, including an insightful examination of its irony in the mid- to late-eighteenth century in combining the old (‘Gothic’) with the new (‘novel’), when the ‘novel’ was established as ‘new’ in specific contrast with old ‘romances’ (22). See also See Punter and Byron 7-12, for an examination of the changing denotation of the word ‘Gothic’ from historical classifier to aesthetic advertisement in the eighteenth century. According to Punter and Byron, the change is significant as it marks the point at which the “medieval”, the primitive, the wild, became invested with positive value in and for itself and came to be seen as representing virtues and qualities that the “modern” world needed: a change that Punter and Byron describe as ‘one of huge dimensions which affected whole areas of architectural, artistic and literary culture in Britain and also in some parts of mainland Europe’ (8). According to these writers, ‘The shift of value was at its apogee in the 1790s’ (9). For further reading on this subject, see Longeuil’s ‘The Word “Gothic” in Eighteenth-Century Criticism’.

part of this wider Gothic aesthetic that found expression in the literary, theatrical, scientific, philosophical and even political arenas of the time. By adopting a view of the Gothic as an aesthetic, it is possible to observe how the supernatural affected society in a deep cultural and epistemological revolution that reached far beyond its literary manifestations.

The view of the Gothic as an aesthetic is not intended to broaden the application of the Gothic label so far as to suggest that it was more widespread than it was. Like every trend or fashion, this interest in the supernatural was not manifest in every single person during the eighteenth century, but its presence within the public body was both large and significant, and if not everyone was touched by the passionate desire to investigate the supernatural, they would undoubtedly at least have been aware of the prodigious public fashion for doing so. This fashion for the supernatural even makes its mark on the world of Jane Austen, which, in its austere presentation of Regency manners and social mores, might be considered the most removed from the fashions of developing London and the ‘trash of the Minerva Press’, and serves to colour most popular conceptions of the late-eighteenth century today. Yet in her parody of Gothic fictions, *Northanger Abbey*, Jane Austen’s characters join in the same indulgence of ghostly tales and Gothic spaces as did countless eighteenth-century women, men, and certainly the protagonists of the many Gothic novels that they devoured in their thousands. What is important to remember of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries is that:

as a whole, the period is central to the emergence of what scholars have come to call the “public sphere”...Literature gained a key role in the process whereby public opinion came to be identified not with the state authority of court or ministry but with the rational debates of private individuals, as expressed in the more diffuse field of print and other mechanisms and spaces of urban culture. (Keemer and Mee xiii)

What this claim means is that, rather than receiving a literary or cultural canon from established authority, these decades were witnessing a revolution in aesthetics driven by the public’s own desires. Indeed, an argument for conceptualising a Gothic aesthetic rather than a purely literary Gothic genre, and hence also the evidence that the popularity of the Gothic novels reflects a greater public obsession with the supernatural, is the fact that when Horace Walpole dramatically introduced the supernatural to the novel form, he was actually drawing

upon an already existing obsession with the supernatural that was begun two years earlier with a national phenomenon known as the Cock Lane ghost.⁸

THE SUPERNATURAL ON 'THE GREAT STAGE' OF ENGLAND: SUPERNATURAL OBSESSION & THE SPECTRE AS SPECTACLE

In January 1762, following an advertisement in the daily newspaper the *Public Ledger*, much of London was gripped with fascination over what was presented as a very real ghost inhabiting a house in Cock Lane. As theatre manager Benjamin Victor describes in 1771, the 'Story of this Ghost was founded on the sudden Death of a young Woman, whose name was *Fanny*' and 'Her Ghost (which was reported to haunt this Girl by strange knockings and scratchings) was to insinuate that some foul Practices had been used to deprive her of her Life; and to bring the Gentleman (as it did) into Trouble' (22). The case soon gained notoriety as 'other newspapers picked up the story and carried regular reports on its progress' and people 'went in Crowds many Days and Nights to an *Haunted House*' (23) to witness this haunting for themselves in repeated nightly interviews held open to the public. So popular was this case of a 'real' ghost in the metropolitan centre that it 'quickly became the talk of London,' attracting crowds of such volume that 'queues of carriages coming from the West End blocked the Strand' (Clery 13).

As Clery points out, the Cock Lane Ghost was such a special event and attracted such large crowds because 'after decades of inconclusive debate', having 'a ghost so open to public scrutiny' seemed 'a chance for believers and sceptics to settle once and for all the question of the existence of spirits' (14). What this ghost occasioned was a widespread public interest in the supernatural: a curiosity over its ontological status that could no longer be concealed or pushed to the margins of rustic England in favour of an Enlightened metropolitan centre. When a ghost moved from the superstitious folkloric country to the fashionable and sceptical city, it figured a role reversal that revealed a deep-seated hesitation over the supernatural that goes a long way toward explaining why the Gothic novels would go on to hold such fascination with all levels of the reading public. As Clery suggests, 'the highly publicised visitations of a ghost in the East End of London...was an event which for us illuminates the

⁸ Clery has explored this idea in the most detail, arguing that 'the founding work of the Gothic genre did not appear out of the blue, the harbinger of a Romantic revolt against the repressive rationalism of the Enlightenment' but was rather 'determined by a complex of values and assumptions already in place' (66).

conditions of Walpole's experiment. The varying responses provoked by the Cock Lane ghost represent both the summation of previous modes of writing and showing the supernatural, and the disclosure of new possibilities' (1). Indeed, the Cock Lane Ghost is an important event, not only as the beginning of a widespread obsession with the supernatural that would characterise the century to follow and influence an entire literary genre, but also as a mark of the particular way in which the supernatural was encountered as a potentially real phenomenon within the wider public life of eighteenth-century England.

The public reception of the Cock Lane Ghost is particularly interesting in several key ways. Firstly, it was characterised by a polarity of opinion over the question of the ghost's reality: within the greater public reception of this event lingered a persistent hesitation between credulity and scepticism not only about 'Scratching Fanny' herself, but about the reality of ghosts and the possibility of communication with them in general, that foregrounds the same hesitation that would characterise the reception of the later Gothic novels. So popular was this event of a 'real' ghost in London, that it sparked a flood of discourses on the supernatural, which catered for both superstitious and sceptical views: 'chapbooks catering for popular taste come off the presses, giving accounts of ghostly apparitions, vouched for as "full" and "true", complete with illustrations, while pamphlets in large numbers took journalistic pains to claim the truth of their narratives in extensive title pages' (Maxwell-Stuart 175). Likewise:

writers and booksellers did their best to...cash in as they could. Among the catchpenny pamphlets in support of belief was a *History of Ghosts, Spirits and Spectres* by an anonymous clergyman, and a complete history of "Scratching Fanny" herself. Two new editions appeared of Delincourt's *A Christian Man's Consolation against the Fears of Death*, prefaced by Daniel De Foe's famous and authenticated report of "The Apparition of Mrs Veal". On the side of scepticism there was *Anti-Canidia: or, Superstition Detected and Exposed* and *The Mystery Reveal'd*, attributed to Oliver Goldsmith. (Clery 14)

'Elsewhere, commercial exploitation neglected to assume even the appearance of serious engagement. There were broadside ballads, among them "Cock Lane Humbug" and 'poems and prints which treated the ghost as pure farce' (Clery 15-6). As Clery suggests, the incident illuminated:

two techniques for ghost-seeing that posit two distinct objects: a "real" supernatural and a "spectacular" supernatural. Yet the opposition of the two terms will prove to be only apparent. For the spectacle of the supernatural, the production of ghosts as entertainment, emerges out of the ideological division between believers and sceptics which characterises the problematic of the "real" supernatural. (17)

Importantly, 'a spectacular conception of the supernatural does not stand over and against the problematic which disputes the question of reality, it is the product of its unresolved contradictions' (Clery 25-7). Indeed, this ambiguity was present in the public reaction to this event itself: 'there is nothing to distinguish the crowds who rush to Cock Lane to witness the haunting from the crowds who congregate at Drury Lane to mock it. It is as though the urban relocation of the supernatural has effected a change in the very nature of superstition' (17). Instead of neatly polarised opinion, the supernatural now elicits ambiguity and hesitation through its appropriation of the urban public sphere – London's greater collective public consciousness – into a liminal space of suspended judgment characterised by the notion of a 'spectacular supernatural'. In this liminal space the entertainment value of the supernatural does not depend upon, though also does not exclude, the question of its reality.

This liminal space between credulity and scepticism in which the supernatural was encountered in the eighteenth century – enacted at both a personal and a public level – parallels and foregrounds the liminal space evoked during the process of reading Gothic fiction. The widespread and highly visible nature of the public obsession with the supernatural at this time extends this private liminal space of reading to a much broader physical and sensory phenomenon that also thrived beyond the bounds of the text in the process of engaging with the vast array of cultural forms – from politics, news, fiction, art, caricatures, chap-books, theatre and scientific displays – that engaged with the supernatural as part of the emerging Gothic aesthetic. As a product of consciousness that was simultaneously created, influenced and challenged by the multifarious public forms indulging in the supernatural, this liminal space was a condition of collective thought, a psychological response, that also depended on, and was mobilised by, a pervasive physical presence within both private and public spaces.

Characterised by its privileging of hesitation between the poles of credulity and scepticism, spectre and spectacle, it is particularly important for literary, cultural, social and scientific history, not only in foregrounding one of the most prodigious literary fashions in history, but also in illustrating the ways in which imagined spaces played an integral part in the psychology of what was one of the most turbulent and formative periods of history. Complex, nuanced, multilayered and interwoven, this liminal space in which the supernatural was imagined, encountered, experienced and considered in the eighteenth century is important to understand as the underlying root of later public, scientific and literary responses to the supernatural and its spatial reality. From Coleridge in the late-eighteenth century, to the

plethora of fantasy writers at the end of the nineteenth, writers and their works, as well as any attendant notion of the supernatural, would be created and received within this same liminal space. As such, in order to understand the complex and multifaceted nuances of this psychological, physical and social space, as well as its significant social, scientific and literary impact over the turn of the century, we might best turn to the metaphor, applied to the supernatural by critics at the time, of the theatre. Through this metaphor, we can understand how the supernatural was both constructed and received in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and also how it mitigated such a pervasive, destabilising and hence potentially threatening force.

The metaphor of the theatre is tripartite in its application to the supernatural. Firstly, theatre is based upon and produced by the nature of illusion – a vision enacted before an audience. As Clery explains, ‘In a theatre the spectators produce the spectacle by the unified focus of their gaze, and are reciprocally united by it as an audience’ (31). In this way, public ‘hauntings’ such as that of the Cock Lane Ghost are constituted as performances by the collective gaze of the crowds who gather to witness the event, while this same gaze enables ‘the self-recognition of the audience as consumers drawn together by a common appetite for novelty’ (31) or for proof of the epistemological reality of the supernatural. Moreover, ‘like a stage play, a haunting is based on illusion, and it is subject to demystification’, while ‘the reproduction of a haunting as theatre...implies that whether genuine or false, a ghost attracts audiences like a stage play’ (27).

Secondly, more than simply indicating the popularity of the supernatural as spectacle, the theatre provides an important model for the specific space of hesitation that the supernatural created for itself in the public imagination because of the liminal ‘beyond’ space it was imagined to occur within. This is because in order to be experienced and enjoyed, theatre involves a suspension of the will: in order to experience the illusion upon the stage – the shared product of the audience’s gaze – the audience must suspend judgement, must hesitate, must engage that ‘willing suspension of disbelief’ required for poetic enjoyment. In this way, the theatrical space becomes, like that induced by the process of reading the Gothic, a liminal space in which the audience may consider the supernatural without a positive act of acceptance or rejection. The space of the theatre represents a space removed from the judgement of the outside world.

Thirdly, and most importantly, the theatre itself, both in physical construction and social function, constitutes a unique world-within-worlds – a dedicated space both within and yet beyond natural everyday space and its processes of organising knowledge. The dual physical and psychological nature of this space is important because when the audience enters the enclosed space of the theatre itself, separate from and yet embedded within the outer everyday world, their physical transgression beyond the boundaries of the everyday into the liminal space of the theatre also facilitates a move beyond the everyday world's traditional boundaries, rules, categories and processes of organising knowledge into a space where traditional social divisions and binary oppositions are destabilised, and traditional processes of organizing knowledge are dissolved: in short, a liminal space beyond the classifications and judgments of the rational world. While this kind of liminal space bears obvious parallels with eighteenth-century descriptions of the supernatural realm, it also performs an important social function in opening up a space between the supernatural events to be considered and the quick, rational judgment that would usually be placed upon them, affording that suspension of judgement – that hesitation – so crucial to the continuing appeal of the supernatural.

This notion of the theatre as a liminal space in which social, political, scientific or other boundaries are destabilised and crossed is an idea that is borne out in social histories of theatre that trace the theatre's transformation in the late-eighteenth century into a domain of social flux and fluidity. To begin with, the theatre itself was a crucial part of late Georgian society: John Keats's letters reveal his 'awareness of the highly charged meanings of the spaces within and around the theatre, how negotiating your place in the late Georgian playhouse, making your way through the crowds outside the theatre or in the spaces surrounding the auditorium, related to the broader drama of situating oneself within the body politic' (Russell 'Keats' 208). As such, the theatre becomes a self-conscious space for social fashioning, dictating and witnessing the fluidity of cross-cultural and cross-social movement and the dissemination of popular tastes and public interests. Further:

the theatre existed in close proximity, literally, ideologically and in terms of textual production, with other spheres of Georgian public life in which politics dominated, particularly the newspaper and periodical press and print culture in general. The metropolitan theatres formed a kind of Grand Central Station of eighteenth-century cultural and social networks, a place of meeting for individuals but also of ranks, circles and genders, where one might cross over from one defining category to another. (Russell 'Theatrical Culture' 110)

As Russell points out, ‘the mobility of artists and theatre workers, capital, audiences, and product that characterizes the theatrical culture of the Regency period...complicates accounts of popular culture that define it in homogenous terms and in binary opposition to hegemonic elite culture’ (Russell ‘Keats’ 195).⁹ It is within precisely this environment of crossing, blurring, blending and sharing that the supernatural is encountered and experienced as a fashionable phenomenon.¹⁰

Yet while the theatre itself represented a melting pot for all sorts of classes and kinds, this forced meeting of social categories was dramatically intensified by advancements in theatre technology. At Drury Lane:

in the 1760s footlights on stage and black outs in the auditorium replaced the diffused light of chandeliers, intensifying the relation of audience to the dramatic action on stage, while it reduced, or at least blurred and generalized, awareness of the behaviour of other members of the audience. Not only did this promote the power of dramatic illusion, but it also made possible the replacement of a socially complex experience of theatre-going, involving a continuous awareness of rank and clique, conversation, argument, flirtation and the risk of rioting, with a situation in which individuals are isolated and interpellated as passive subjects while being united by the shared experience of a vision. (Clery 41)

The darkness in the theatre simultaneously alienates individuals from one another by dismantling awareness of class distinctions and unites them as a faceless audience participating in a shared vision – the spectacle emphasised by the lights on stage. The audience’s focus is now firmly on the supernatural represented before them, whether it is a potentially ‘real’ supernatural, such as the Cock Lane ghost, a dramatic supernatural, as in the many supernaturally themed plays and dramas released around the turn of the century following the popularity of Gothic literature, or an ambiguous blend of the two, as with the various phantasmagoria, magic lantern or scientific displays that developed in the early 1800s.¹¹

⁹ Russell emphasizes the mobilized traffic of Regency theatre with the example of ‘the celebrated itinerant penny showman John Richardson, whose booth at Bartholomew Fair was commemorated by William Hone in 1825’: ‘illuminated by “fifteen hundred variegated illumination-lamps”, Richardson’s theatre staged a program of melodramas, pantomimes, and panoramas for up to 1,000 people, at ticket prices ranging from 2 shillings for “box seats” to sixpence for the “gallery”, suggesting considerable overlap with the clientele of the fixed theatres’ (‘Keats’ 195).

¹⁰ Indeed, the power of the theatrical forum in influencing literary spheres is seen when Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* became commercially successful only after its conversion to a stage production (one which Shelley herself attended), after which several reprints of the novel were ordered.

¹¹ See below.

This destabilising of traditional divisions between binary oppositions such as high and low culture in the theatre represents the greater fluidity that the supernatural afforded such binaries in the greater public engagement with the supernatural. One of the most important and enduring aspects of the supernatural is its access by and appeal to all classes and kinds of people: indeed, while superstitions were frequently associated with the less educated folk cultures, and ‘supernatural’ experiences were routinely drawn upon as a way of wresting supernatural or divine control from the governing religious bodies, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries it was also, by its very elusiveness, a potent source of curiosity and intrigue for the more educated classes as well. In the case of the Cock Lane Ghost, the ‘binary inherent in the paradigm of the “real supernatural”: high/reason vs low/superstition’ was ‘an opposition symbolically disrupted by any apparent credit given to the marvellous by the elite’ (Clery 30). Referring to the events at Cock Lane, Benjamin Victor wrote in 1771, ‘It would be incredible to relate the Numbers of Persons of Distinction that attended this Delusion! many of whom treated it as a serious and most important affair’ (22-4). Among such eminent and fashionable personages were Samuel Johnson and Horace Walpole, while the royal household featured in several of the major ‘supernatural’ events of the eighteenth century, including the Cock Lane ghost (Clery 30). The destabilising effects of the theatrical liminal space created by the unified gaze upon the Cock Lane ghost allow the supernatural to evade negation at the hands of a more educated ‘elite’ and hover in that liminal state of hesitation so crucial to the kind of persistent appeal that it would hold over the century to follow. As Clery explains, ‘divisions of rank within the audience are relatively insignificant within the context of spectacle. There is democracy at the level of epistemology: the elite are not expected to “know better”’ (31).

It is within this context of flux and fluidity that theatres begin to build upon their liminal social function and use their physical liminality to actively participate in the investigation of the supernatural that thrived in the rapidly emerging Gothic aesthetic. In this process, the physical theatre itself becomes a liminal space on the edge of the world of spirits – a space, like that of the Gothic novels, in which normal physical laws are suspended and the world of the supernatural is brought near for the audience to experience and consider. In the theatre, this sense of transportation into ‘another world’ where the supernatural can be entertained as a potentially real and dangerously close phenomenon was enhanced by the audience’s experience of physically entering a separate space. Once inside this liminal space, the latest techniques for creating realistic portrayals of the supernatural were employed, all designed to have a profound effect upon the viewers who came in droves to experience the supernatural in

the world of the theatre. Drawing heavily upon the taste for the Gothic and its settings, designers such as William Capon, senior designer for Drury Lane, emphasised the importance of space and place in evoking a sense of the supernatural by sparing no expense in their set and theatre decorations. For example, Capon's 'design for the convent chapel in *De Monfort* employed all available levels of side-wing grooves in its 52-foot vista of nave, aisles, and choir, with a storm beating against a pointed-arch window, through which a grave was visible in the distance. The setting was acclaimed more universally than the play, and was adapted for later Gothic plays' (Norton *Gothic* 197). Similarly, Radcliffe herself emphasised the importance of such designers 'by whose magic a crowded Theatre has been changed to a lonely shore, to a witch's cave, to an enchanted island, to a murderer's castle, to the ramparts of an usurper, to the battle, to the midnight carousal of the camp or the tavern, to every various scene of the living world' ('On the Supernatural' 151).

A fascinating example is the Temple of Health and Hymen, a popular theatrical immersion experience which opened in London in 1780, and according to Peter Otto, 'quickly became a fashionable entertainment, with newspapers describing as astonishing "the multitudes of the Nobility and Gentry, indeed people of all ranks", who patronized it' (68). Involving halls, archways and mirrors designed to direct the view, screens, lights and various techniques of illusion, the Temple of Health constituted a physical construction of liminal virtual space into which members of the public could actually move and experience the 'supernatural'. As Otto notes, this temple's 'attractive power partly derived from its ability to create a plausible second-order reality in which its audiences could be immersed' (68). James Graham, the temple's founder and theatrical operator, advertised that for 'glowing, vivid, and brilliant imaginations' it realized 'the Celestial Soul-transporting and dissolving descriptions that are given in the Fairy Tales – in the Tales of the Genii – and in the Arabian Night's Entertainments'.¹² In this virtual supernatural realm, as well as those created upon the Gothic stage in theatres, the audience physically and mentally enters the same kind of liminal space that the Gothic novels construct – the castles, abbeys and crypts in which the borders between the natural and supernatural worlds are blended and in which faith and scepticism are momentarily suspended. Capitalising on the shared vision of the audience within the liminal space of the theatre, the theatre's production aims to replicate the liminal thresholds between the natural and supernatural worlds, essentially drawing the audience into these same spaces in which the Gothic heroines encounter the supernatural and allowing them to feel as if they have entered the kind of mystical borderland space in which the supernatural might really

¹² James Graham, [Advertisement], *The Morning Herald*, 15 July 1783.

appear before them.¹³ In the liminal space of the theatre, the reality of the ‘illusions’ is not important. The key is that the audience becomes united in a hesitation upon considering what lies beyond the limit they now traverse in the liminal space of the theatre. Whether it is the space of the theatre or the space of the imagination, the audience is transported from the everyday world to this unique, liminal space where the focus is directed at the supernatural beings approaching from ‘the other side’, be it beyond the curtain or beyond the vale of mortal life.

This unique liminal space of the theatre represents the general public engagement with the supernatural both metaphorically and literally as a space in which the supernatural was encountered in the increasing number of plays and theatrical shows that took advantage of the public vogue for the supernatural by finding increasingly successful ways to represent it on the stage. The Drury Lane and Covent Garden theatres responded to the Cock Lane Ghost ‘by staging rival productions of Addison’s comedy *The Drummer: or, The Haunted House*. Although the play had failed on its first showing in 1715 and had not been revived since, in the present atmosphere of ghost-mania success was guaranteed, or so the new prologue to the Covent Garden production implied with humorous cynicism’ (Clery 16):

If in this credulous, believing age,
We bring a harmless Ghost upon the Stage,
Some will perhaps conclude – in hopes of gain,
We’ve lur’d the Knocking Spirit from Cock-lane. (cited in Clery 16)

As Clery indicates, ‘the high point of each performance came when one of the characters stated, out of the assumptions of another era, “’Tis the solitude of the Country that creates these Whimsies; there was never such a thing as a Ghost heard of at *London*.” For now a ghost had become one the most fashionable metropolitan diversions’ (16). Such comic reversals of ‘the standard mapping of superstition, credulity in the countryside and scepticism in the town’ (16) were common and emphasise the general public fascination with and hesitation over the supernatural at this time. Another example was the ‘hugely successful new Interlude, *The Farmer’s Return*,’ performed by the much-celebrated actor David Garrick at Drury Lane, ‘in which a sceptical rustic mocks the credulity of the city-folk’, a device which represents a change in attitudes toward the supernatural where ‘the invisible world’ has been

¹³ Theatre itself has always held a close relationship with notions of the supernatural. See Goodall’s examination of the links between ideas of the supernatural, possession, and the stage presence or ‘magnetism’ of the actor (*Stage Presence* 67, 72).

wrested 'from the sphere of religious doctrine' and now occupies instead, the 'incongruous, hilarious embrace by the fashion system of the city' as a spectacle and a curiosity (17).

This theatrical embrace of the vogue for the supernatural was not limited to representations of the Cock Lane Ghost. While 'in drama, the period is often considered a desert, especially where the antitheatrical prejudices of influential Romantic writers continue to hold sway', the theatre actually 'remained a key cultural institution throughout these years' (Keemer and Mee xii). Exploiting the widespread interest in the numinous, theatres, pantomimes and other stages poured increasing resources into creating an 'other-worldly' experience for theatre-goers within the liminal space of the theatre, often turning to the Gothic novels for source material.¹⁴ James Boaden, dramatist and theatre manager, adapted many Gothic novels for the stage in the 1790s, including Lewis's *The Monk* and Radcliffe's *The Italian*, and his essay 'A Ghostly Performance' (1794) details the methods by which 'the supernatural may best be exhibited upon the stage', in order to elicit "'That sacred terror, that severe delight," for which alone it is excusable to overpass the ordinary limits of nature' (119). Boaden's language picks up on that same language used by Radcliffe and other Gothic writers to justify the use of the supernatural in literature, and likewise employs Burkean notions of the sublime to justify the human crossing of the threshold between the worlds – 'the limits of nature'.¹⁵ The seriousness with which this crossing of the threshold between worlds is discussed points to the increasing power of the supernatural upon the stage, where it was not merely accepted within comedies, but was increasingly presented as serious drama.

In addition to the revived performances of Shakespeare's supernatural plays such as *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, with increasing attention given to more believable ways of presenting the ghosts, contemporary Gothic plays such as Matthew Lewis's extremely popular play, *The Castle Spectre*, first performed at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane on 14th December 1797, were marketed not as comedies, but as 'a drama'. As Norton explains, 'Gothic drama was especially "spectacular", and achieved some notable successes' (175). Michael Kelly's 1797 review of *The Castle Spectre* states that 'It had a prodigious run...The first night of its representation, the sinking of the Ghost in a flame of fire, and the beauty of the whole scene,

¹⁴ 'Pantomime was readily classed in opposition to legitimate drama: the marvellous versus nature; the irrational versus reason; spectacle versus meaning; sound (music, effects) versus language' and as such, it is not surprising that it 'remained the dominant mode of representing the supernatural on stage' (Clery 37-8).

¹⁵ This close relationship between theatre and literature, particularly within the widespread fascination with the supernatural that was expressed as the Gothic aesthetic, was commonly emphasised. For example, in his 1811 Introduction to Walpole's *Otranto*, Sir Walter Scott refers to the elements of the novel in theatrical terms as 'the scene, the performers, and action' (324).

had a most sublime effect'.¹⁶ Indeed, the supernatural achieved such a prodigious presence in the fashionable theatres of London that Academicus was prompted to refer, in an article for the *Monthly Mirror* in 1800, to 'the terrific, wild, and numerous apparitions that haunt Old Drury and Covent Garden'.¹⁷

Further strengthening the relationship between the supernatural as public spectacle and the theatre were the increasingly popular travelling magicians, stage magic shows, pantomimes, magic lantern shows, phantasmagoria and scientific displays that utilise the growing atmosphere of ambiguity between science and superstition.¹⁸ These displays of 'occult' phenomena were widely advertised in the emerging mass print culture and attracted large audiences who were entertained as much by the tantalizing possibility of seemingly 'impossible' magical feats as the opportunity to try and unmask the banal mechanics behind them. This ambiguous reputation followed the performers of magic shows and was often actively encouraged by the advertisements themselves, which drew equally upon the language of science and occultism in a practice that seems, in the character of the late-eighteenth-century academic field, to not only legitimize the supernatural by casting it in scientific terms, but also to supernaturalise the scientific and give it the same kind of spectacle status as those appearances such as the Cock Lane Ghost. A poster for a performance by The Sieur Comus on the 9th of January 1795 states that 'he will exhibit many operations MIRACULOUS, MAGNETICAL, PHILOSOPHICAL, OPTICAL, PYROTECHNICAL, STEGANOGRAPHICAL, SYMPATHETICAL, MATHEMATICAL, ORIENTAL, and PYRAMIDICAL', while newspaper advertisements for the same magician in 1794 refer to his 'new philosophic deceptions.' By February 10th, however, the same Sieur Comus was advertising a feat 'never attempted before by Mankind' that purported to 'incontestably prove that there are possible means of procuring a knowledge of future events'.¹⁹ In the spirit of public enquiry, the borders between science and superstition are blurred and these borders are

¹⁶ Michael Kelly, 'Reminiscences of M. G. Lewis' (1797), *Reminiscences of Michael Kelly*. Vol. 2, London: Henry Colburn, 1826. 140-3, p.140.

¹⁷ Academicus's article represents one of the scathing voices against the wide popularity and multifarious forms of the supernatural: 'the fairy tales; the Cock Lane Ghost; *Mother Bunch's* romances; or even the mighty magician of *Udolpho*, *Aladin* [sic] and the *Wonderful Lamp*, or the *Castle Spectre*, are very well in the nursery, will please children, when the *coral* will not, but are not to be endured by men of sense and judgment, or who have ceased to think or act like children' ('On the Absurdities of the Modern Stage' *Monthly Mirror* 10 [September 1800]:180-2).

¹⁸ Even scientific shows to showcase advancements in such fields as electricity and magnetism were presented in the vein of supernatural 'miracles': when science is beginning to chart the dangerous terrain of using invisible phenomena (such as aether, static electricity and magnetism) to explain visible effects, their work treads that ambiguous threshold between science and the supernatural. See Goodall's *Stage Presence* 75.

¹⁹ These and the following two articles were accessed in the Harry Price Library of Magical Literature, Senate House Library, London.

precisely what were being investigated. Travelling 'occult' stage shows utilised the language of science, travelling science shows utilised the language of the occult, and both utilised the theatrical space surrounding the public enjoyment of the supernatural to attract an audience.

This potential for ambiguity in the character of the stage magician also presented the possibility for scandal – an equally enjoyed public spectacle. A newspaper article of 1772 reports that 'on Thursday a man dressed as a Conjuror, with a large wig, a hat of extraordinary size, and a long black cloak, was taken up in Smithfield, for obtaining money from several persons under pretense of telling their fortunes, and was committed to Bridewell for one month.' Another article reporting on the same incident adds:

The mischiefs which these Imposters cause to the Public are as shocking as they are inconceivable; and Persons, foolishly desirous of being acquainted with future events relative to themselves, establish a credulity in their own minds, to which nothing appears improbable that these Conjurors relate. The vainest hopes, the falsest fears, and the unjustest suspicions, are by them wickedly encouraged, to the injury of their Clients and others, many of whom are Servants.

Importantly, this article does not make it absolutely clear whether it is the action of fortune-telling itself that is the untrustworthy impostor, or whether the imposition lies in the ineptitude of the conjurers who claim to be able to do it; an ambiguity, though slight, that still contributes to the growing public uncertainty towards matters of the supernatural. The class reference in this passage is also significant, especially when considering the popular origins of the folklore and superstition that was beginning to emerge into the circles of higher society as a popular form of both entertainment and genuine curiosity. As Russell argues, 'metropolitan commercialized culture in the late eighteenth century tried to capitalize on popular superstition and tradition by repackaging it as gothic spectacle.' Further, 'such criss-crossings and overlays between legitimate and illegitimate forms, provincial and metropolitan artists and audiences, superstition and commercialized "mass" magic, highlight, once again, the redundancy of the binary model of culture for this period' (199).

This energetic and diverse exploration of the supernatural might have reached a crescendo and waned, had its deep social, philosophical, scientific and literary impact not also deeply influenced the Romantic writers working during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Through the work of the Romantic poets, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge in particular, the Gothic's concerns with the supernatural would be elevated to a level of critical respect, and united with the Romantic's preoccupant questions of perception, the mind, and,

most importantly, dreams, in an instance of literary influence and conceptual integration that would heavily influence later writers and form one of the most significant steps in the evolution of the modern literary fantasy genre. These concerns will be explored in Chapter Four.

THE SUPERNATURAL & MORPHEAN SPACE: S. T. COLERIDGE'S ROMANTIC-GOTHIC

The same time period that witnessed the emergence of a public fascination with exploring supernatural realms via the Gothic aesthetic in supernatural novels, 'spirit' appearances, plays, stage shows and scientific demonstrations of 'occult' phenomena also gives rise to a much more commonly recognized literary and cultural phenomenon: the Romantic poets and their metaphysical interests in the related subjects of dreams, the mind, madness, nature and questions of the self. The emergence of the Romantic writers and their ideologies at the same time as the pronounced public taste for the Gothic is no coincidence; indeed, while the terms 'Gothic' and 'Romantic' have traditionally been treated quite separately as two poles of the literary class canon, it is important to note that rather than developing separately, these categories evolved in direct and close communication with one another. As a largely aristocratic, learned and intellectual group, the writers now termed 'Romantic', figure-headed during the 1790s and early 1800s by Wordsworth and Coleridge but also including writers such as Lamb and Southey, sought to distance themselves from what they perceived as the vulgarities of the popular Gothic literature – what Sir Walter Scott would scathingly describe in 1810 as literature that was even lower than 'the lowest denizens of Grub-street narrating' ('Review' 341) – even at the same time as they drew heavily upon its primary concerns with the supernatural and its liminal spaces. Importantly, it is testament to the powerful allure of the supernatural during this time that the writers we now class as 'Romantic' endeavoured to find other ways to examine Gothic subject matter, or attempted to disguise their heavy reliance on Gothic tropes, even at the same time as they publically dismissed and disparaged such writing.

One of the ways the Romantic writers sought to disassociate their interests from the Gothic was via their close personal and intellectual relationships with the leading figures of pioneering science and medicine. But rather than create a separate line of inquiry, it is in the work of the traditionally conceived 'Romantic' writers that the intersections between science, philosophy and the Gothic supernatural find their fullest force and probe the deeper questions about reality and space that traditional notions of supernatural spirit worlds imply. As such, it is at its intersection with this intellectual context that the question of supernatural space is

elevated from its popular Gothic enjoyment and legitimised as a more serious critical and intellectual inquiry that would ensure its continued reception into the long nineteenth century.

While many of the Romantic writers engaged with the Gothic supernatural and shared close relationships with scientific figures, none is more representative of this cross-disciplinary context, or indeed of the Romantic enquiry into the supernatural as a whole, than Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Coleridge was both extremely well read (Adair suggests that ‘it is rarely safe to assume that there was a book published during his life-time that Coleridge had not read’ [2]) and remarkably familiar with the fields of science, medicine, philosophy and the arts. As Vickers passionately argues, ‘Coleridge’s extraordinary ability to bring ideas from widely different domains into fruitful dialogue with one another constitutes one of the most exciting things about his thought’ (166). Engaged with the leading philosophical, scientific and literary trends of his day, and recording his thoughts in a wealth of journals, notebooks, essays, marginalia, and, of course, his poetry, Coleridge provides an illuminating cross-disciplinary view of the Romantic engagement with the supernatural.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge is one of the most important writers in the evolution of the modern fantasy genre, as it is in his work that we find the most complete realisation of a special kind of relationship that would affect the trajectory of the supernatural throughout the entire century to follow: the relationship between the space of the supernatural and the space of dreams. Using his connections with the leading brain scientists, philosophers and thinkers of the time, as well as other poets, writers and his ever-expanding knowledge of most printed material of his day, Coleridge spent most of his life attempting to develop a theory of dreaming that would satisfy both his experiences of physiology and nightmare, and his important senses of the creative imagination and the vast, potentially supernatural, spaces of this world. Remaining in both his private journals, letters, marginalia and notebooks, and in his published and celebrated poetry, Coleridge’s exploration of what he came to consider the shared space of dreams and the supernatural, and therefore dreaming space as a vehicle through which the supernatural might be accessed (or which, conversely, it might gain access to the natural world through), raises the Gothic preoccupation with the supernatural to a level of psychological and aesthetic importance that only serves to strengthen the ambiguous dialectic between faith and scepticism that the Gothic aesthetic was concurrently establishing.

Yet Coleridge’s engagement with the supernatural and dreams is markedly different from that of the Gothic writers in one key way: rather than adopting the popular Gothic motifs of the

day simply to sell or entertain,¹ Coleridge's exploration of supernatural and dreaming spaces arises from his personal reflections upon his own, often private, experiences. As such, while the unyielding critic might insist, despite the evidence presented in the previous chapters, that the Gothic engagement with the supernatural was driven by entertainment, rather than a serious consideration of the realities of supernatural space, the same cannot be said of Coleridge's own engagement with this topic, much of which was recorded in his own private journals and letters. Several critics have documented the extraordinary degree of self-awareness that Coleridge demonstrated in regard to his own psychology and health in an age where medical and scientific accounts of the body and mind were still being highly debated.² Rule argues that Coleridge displayed an 'unusually heightened sense of self-awareness and a rare capacity for writing about the landscape of the inner life in both its affective and cognitive aspects' (25) and it is in light of this ability that Coleridge's explorations of dreams and the supernatural must be considered. As such, and taking into account his intense engagement with the medical, scientific, philosophical and literary figures of his day, Coleridge's philosophical and poetic engagement with what he came to see as the shared spaces of dreams and the supernatural should be taken as evidence of the serious nature of the general enquiry into the supernatural, at least as it was held by some, including, in the case of Coleridge and many of his correspondents, several of the most eminent thinkers of the day.

ROMANTIC, GOTHIC, & THE SCIENTIFIC IMAGINATION

The trajectory from Gothic to Romantic is one that is both complex and extremely difficult to define. From a literary and historical perspective, the terms 'Romantic' and 'Gothic' have gathered a multitude of various connotations that further complicate the issue. Before we can begin an analysis of Coleridge's Romantic engagement with the Gothic supernatural, these terms require some explanation in order to properly address their complex and contested relationship to one another. Traditionally speaking, in much criticism of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the terms 'Gothic' and 'Romantic' have been used in contrasting ways, where they were set up almost in opposition to each other: two strands of literary development that evolved separately and are often treated in separate fields of

¹ See below for a discussion of the degree to which Romantic poets utilised Gothic elements to appeal to the public taste for the supernatural.

² See Vickers, Ford and Richardson in particular.

research, with quite different statuses: the high Romantic and the low Gothic.³ However, recent critics such as Clery and Gamer problematise such distinctions and point out the important ways in which these terms not only inform each other, but exist in a complex relationship of cross-fertilisation where ‘the processes through which both terms emerged in large part were determined by their perceived relation to one another’ (Gamer 2).⁴ These critics stress that a proper consideration of the close relationship between these terms is crucial in order to maintain an accurate and inclusive perspective of the late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century literary, intellectual and social climates.

In the previous chapters, the Gothic was explored not as a set of literary conventions, as it has traditionally been conceived, but as an aesthetic that encompassed literary, dramatic, scientific, philosophical, social, economic and even political spheres. This view of the Gothic as an aesthetic is important in allowing an appropriately wide scope upon the historical implications of the eighteenth-century celebration of and investigation into the liminal spaces of the supernatural. Gamer takes a similar approach to what he sees as the traditional use of the term ‘Romantic’ to ‘denote a literary period or period-defining movement’, which he argues is ‘misleading because it posits as representative writers who literally did not represent the range of writing of these decades’ (4), a view that is supported by the range of writers and literary styles explored in the previous chapters.⁵ Instead, and quite importantly, he posits ‘the development of Romanticism’ in a much closer relationship to the Gothic, in which it becomes ‘a response to gothic’s reception’ (4). In this view, ‘negotiations between readers, writers and reviewers over the nature and status of the gothic produced a context to which the ideology of Romanticism was a response’ (7).⁶ Further:

³ Hume argued in 1969 for the close relationship between Gothic and Romantic writing, stating, ‘That Gothicism is closely related to Romanticism is perfectly clear, but it is easier to state the fact than to prove it tidily and convincingly. There is a persistent suspicion that Gothicism is a poor and probably illegitimate relation of Romanticism, and a consequent tendency to treat it that way. There are those, indeed, who would like to deny the relationship altogether. James Foster, in his *History of the Pre-Romantic Novel in England* (New York, 1949)...ignores Walpole almost completely, while discussing Ann Radcliffe’s works as “a special development of the sentimental novel”...and dismissing Gothicism as mummery imported into sentimental fiction’ (282).

⁴ The frontispiece to Gamer’s *Romanticism and the Gothic: Genre, Reception, and Canon Formation* claims that it is ‘the first full-length study to examine the links between high Romantic literature and what has often been thought of as merely a popular genre – the Gothic.’

⁵ In this vein, Gamer notes the power of Romantic ideology ‘as a self-perpetuating model, established in the powerful self-assertions of Romantic writers that have shaped our notions of periodicity, cultural politics, authorship, and intellectual commonality’ (7). In support of his argument against the totalizing use of the term Romantic, Gamer calls upon McGann’s ‘observation that a large amount of the work produced during the Romantic period is not “Romantic”’: an observation which “calls into question the relevance of the historical category”’ (4). See also Siskin’s *The Historicity of Romantic Discourse*.

⁶ Gamer’s opinion that genres may be defined through their reception resists traditional accounts of genre formation from Aristotle to Bakhtin, which ‘privilege the idea of direct communication’ between preceding and contemporary writers ‘rather than focusing upon the cultural forces that dictate the conditions under which one writer reads another’ (24).

while gothic's contentious reception constituted it as a conspicuously 'low' form against which Romantic writers could oppose themselves, its immense popularity, economic promise, and sensational subject matter made this opposition a complex and ultimately conflicted and duplicitous endeavour. It is no accident that a considerable amount of early nineteenth-century writing explicitly denies (or otherwise deflects) its association with the gothic at its moments of closest kinship...In these moments of adjacency and overlapping...the gothic perpetually haunts as an aesthetic to be rejected, Romanticism's construction of high literary culture. (7)

In this way, Romantic writing can be seen as marked by an ambiguous and simultaneous rejection and adoption of the Gothic in which the gulf between Gothic's 'unprecedented popularity' and its 'almost unanimous critical vilification after 1795' produce a volatile economic and ideological context out of which Romantic writers stake 'their processes of self-definition' (23).

Clery asks how the Romantic 'claim to inspired origination, to originality,' can be 'sustained under the pressure of repetition' and argues that it is precisely this 'banal assembly-line commodity' of Gothic supernatural literature from which 'Romantic' writers like Coleridge and Wordsworth sought to distance themselves in their quest for originality, inspiration and poetic 'genius' (139). Gamer notes this troubled process of Romantic self-definition in opposition to the Gothic in the fact that Coleridge was writing 'negative reviews of gothic fiction by Radcliffe, Robinson, and Lewis, at the same time (1797) that he [was] composing his *Osorio*, "The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner," "Christabel," and "Kubla Khan"' (33), which are some of Coleridge's most supernaturally-focused poems. In a similar vein, Peter Otto notes Coleridge's description in his *Biographia Literaria* of Gothic fiction 'as a machine that "fixes, reflects and [then] transmits" into the mind of gullible readers figments of the imagination' (51). Coleridge's pejorative tone here in 1817 is unmistakable, but what is interesting is its contrast to his aim in writing for the *Lyrical Ballads*, in which his endeavours were to be:

directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic; yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith. Mr Wordsworth, on the other hand, was to propose to himself as his object to give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom and direction it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us. (*Biographia* 2.6)

Importantly, Clery draws attention to the close relationship between the aim of these Romantic writers and the Gothic works that they are drawing upon:

it is striking how closely Coleridge's task accords with that of Walpole, announced in the second preface of *The Castle of Otranto*: to naturalise the circumstances of the supernatural creations in order to engage the emotions of the reader to the utmost. Wordsworth, on the other hand, is to attempt an effect which approximates the technique of Ann Radcliffe's 'explained supernatural', 'supernaturalising' and thus defamiliarising common reality. (173)⁷

Indeed, this close relationship between the Gothic aesthetic and its adoption by Romantic writers despite their avowed refusal of its critical validity led to confused reception of Romantic works as they were published. *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, which remains one of Coleridge's most famous works, met with the critical response to the German 'Sturm und Drang' movement in its early reviews during the 1790s. Watt explores how *The Rime* met with both support and criticism, but a common thread throughout both voices was the perceived link between Coleridge's work and the 'German sublimity' that was both widely commercially successful and critically vilified: for the *Analytical*'s reviewer in 1798, the poem had 'more of the extravagance of a mad German poet, than of the simplicity of our ancient ballad writers' while Robert Southey called it 'a Dutch attempt at German sublimity' (74). Similarly, 'Charles Lamb (in a letter to Southey) was only able to defend Coleridge's "Rime" by claiming it to be a "native" rather than a foreign work ("a right English attempt, and a successful one, to dethrone German sublimity")', just as Francis Jeffrey sought to emphasize in a letter of 1799 that the poem – in terms of "true poetical horror" and "new images" – actually superseded "all the German ballads and tragedies" (Watt 74).⁸ As Clery argues, 'the categories of "high" and "popular" culture....were not yet available to defuse the contradiction; rather, it was out of this contradiction – not of course exclusive to Gothic but especially salient there – that the need for a categorical opposition was registered and eventually articulated' (139).

In this way, the terms 'Romantic' and 'Gothic' may still be used to reflect a categorical opposition to one another; but it is an opposition marked by a tension and a close relationship of cross-fertilisation and communication. This opposition draws attention to the very real

⁷ Norton goes so far as to assert that Romantic writers such as 'Coleridge, Byron and Shelley literally plagiarized passages from Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho*' (225).

⁸ That these critics were sensing Coleridge's very genuine interest in the German 'Sturm und Drang' movement is illuminated by Watt, who notes that 'Coleridge was impressed enough by Schiller to go on to adapt *The Ghost-Seer* (as *Osario*) and translate *Wallenstein*, as well as to dedicate a poem "To The Author of *The Robbers*"' (74).

division between popular and elite culture that was being actively articulated at the time by the writers and publishers of supernatural literature. In this division, writers were being presented for the first time with a choice of how to represent or 'sell' themselves: on the one hand were the writers who began to use the Gothic or 'supernatural' label to market their texts in the same vein as other best-sellers, thus ensuring their similar popular reception in the reading marketplace; on the other hand, were those who wished to distance themselves from the perceived vulgarities and limitations of such popular Gothic literature even as they adopted its central motifs of the supernatural. In Gamer's words, these kinds of writers – the 'Romantic' writers like Wordsworth and Coleridge – are 'governed by a kind of double perspective – one that seeks to retain gothic materials at the same time that it historicizes, critiques, rejects, neutralizes, or otherwise disguises their gothicism' (14). Thus while the similarities and cross-fertilisation between the Gothic and Romantic must be remembered, these terms also provide a useful distinction between the popular literature of the supernatural that was being produced in a formulaic and performative sense at the time, and the more self-consciously intellectual and serious examinations of dreams, the mind and the supernatural that were undertaken by the writers we now term 'Romantic'. Importantly, in this light, while the Gothic and its texts would continue to maintain an ambivalent reputation throughout the nineteenth century, it is these Romantic writers who take the Gothic concerns of the supernatural and elevate them to an intellectual level that was acceptable to later writers. It is through the prolific works of Romantic writers such as Coleridge that the supernatural achieved the enduring power it would hold for the rest of the century to follow as writers turned again and again to Coleridge's ideas as they too explored their fascination with the alternative spaces of dreams and the supernatural.

One of the ways in which the Romantic writers elevated the Gothic concerns with the supernatural from their critically vilified prosaic trappings to a level of critical respect and longevity was through their close relationship with the leading intellectual figures of science and philosophy. Though now science and literature are considered quite separate domains, a unique nexus occurs from the late eighteenth century, and continues part way into the nineteenth century, in which these areas were inextricably linked and informed each other in a close interdisciplinary dialogue that renders not only Romantic writing a scientific caste, but also scientific investigation a distinctly Romantic concern with dreams, consciousness and

other states of mind.⁹ As Richardson argues in his insightful study of the relationship between British Romanticism and science:

Any number of motifs, ideals, and ‘discoveries’ routinely attributed to literary Romanticism – including the split or fragmented psyche; the revaluation of feeling, instinct and intuition; the active mind; developmental models of subject formation; the unconscious; even a new, more humane construction of ‘idiocy’ – feature prominently in the era’s emergent biological psychologies as well. (xiv)

Indeed, while many of the Romantic poets engaged with leading scientists to inform their thought and elevate their Gothic concerns to a level of serious critical inquiry, the domain of science also took inspiration from literature, and many of the pioneering figures of early brain science, biology, physics and metaphysics also wrote poetry and literary criticism. As Ford illustrates:

what is particularly fascinating throughout the later part of the eighteenth century is that both poets *and* medical writers entered the debate concerning the nature of the imagination. On this score there was no clear distinction between theorists and practitioners of medicine and those of poetry. A medical man might also be a poet, and vice versa, and topics that engaged medical men were equally interesting to poets: Mark Akenside, Tobias Smollett, Oliver Goldsmith, Erasmus Darwin and Thomas Beddoes were all prominent men of letters who were also medical practitioners by training. (6)¹⁰

Moreover, this close relationship between the figures of literature and science was strengthened by existing on a personal level as well as an intellectual one. Importantly, this effectively created a unique society in which Gothic concerns with the supernatural could be entertained free from their pedestrian associations with commerce and popular entertainment.

⁹ Richardson argues that ‘the pioneering neuroscience of the era manifests a “Romantic” character, and that literary Romanticism intersects in numerous and significant ways with the physiological psychology of the time’ (1). My study’s line of inquiry into ‘the extensive commerce between literary and scientific investigations of mind in the Romantic era’ contributes to what Richardson calls ‘a vital new area for research in the history of literature and aesthetics’ (xiv) and adds an original perspective by examining the relationships noted between Romantic science and literature by critics such as Richardson, Ford and Katritzky in light of their effects upon genre formation (in their relation to the perceived or attempted division between Gothic and Romantic literature) and especially in relation to their effects upon the wide-ranging public debate upon the nature of space and the supernatural.

¹⁰ See also Richardson, who provides a neatly descriptive overview of the character of scientific, literary and theatrical overlap in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries: ‘It was a time when poets (like Coleridge) consorted with laboratory scientists and when philosophical doctors (like Darwin) gave point to their scientific theories in verse, when phrenology and mesmerism gained adherents across the medical community, when Bell could work out his physiological psychology in a series of lectures to London artists, scientists could perform as showmen, and Galvani’s experiments with “animal electricity” could be replicated by an eager public “wherever frogs were to be found”’ (7).

Of this kind of relationship, Coleridge is again the best example. Katritzky provides an analysis of the close personal and intellectual relationships that Coleridge shared with many top scientific thinkers of his day, arguing that ‘Coleridge was perfectly at home among these remarkable men, both on personal and intellectual terms, and actively participated in their scientific arguments’ (272). Richardson supports this idea, stressing that Coleridge was ‘more deeply engaged with the brain science of his era than has generally been acknowledged and is in this way representative of any number of writers we now call “Romantic”’ (5). Similarly, Ford examines ‘the fascinating ways in which Coleridge draws on and contributes to some of the major scientific, medical and philosophical issues of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries’ where ‘in pursuing the topic over four decades of great significance in the history of science and medicine, he read widely and deeply across a staggering range of works; and he was often engaged with various theories and topical controversies which were directly relevant to his enquiries into dreams and dreaming’ (3). Further, ‘although his concept of the imagination is frequently discussed in relation to a poetic sphere, it is clear from his engagement with a variety of medical and scientific works that the imagination for Coleridge is also medical, physical’ (3).

Importantly, Coleridge utilised this close relationship with the leading figures of science to inform his lifelong intellectual and creative engagement with dreams and the supernatural that he expressed in his journals, notebooks, letters, marginalia and poetry, and most particularly, though this has received the least attention, the relationship that dreams and the supernatural shared through the unique kinds of spaces within which they were thought to occur: spaces both within and yet ‘beyond’ the space of the everyday material world.

COLERIDGE & SPACE

Coleridge’s awareness of space was more profound than most others writing during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and seems to have lasted most of his life. In particular, he engaged with space in three important ways: the first was the Romantic notion of ‘the Vast’ – a concept that united Romantic ideas of awesome sublimity with an anxious awareness of the huge and unknowable spaces of the universe (such as oceans, deserts, and, most particularly, the infinite reaches of outer space) that impressed upon the mind the feeble limits of human perception and knowledge; the second was his obvious engagement with the

inescapable public phenomenon of the Gothic supernatural and its fantastic literature through which he came to associate ‘the Vast’ with the potential for the supernatural realm to exist; and the third was in his unique and carefully developed theory of dreams in which he posited that they occurred within their own unique space, which he called ‘Somnial or Morphean Space’ (*Notebooks* 4.5360), and which was a space both located within the mind and yet spanned immeasurable regions beyond it. In this way, Coleridge’s notion of dreaming space is linked with his appreciation of the Vast, and significantly, it similarly shared, for Coleridge, a link with the supernatural. This perceived overlap between the space of dreams and the space of the supernatural, where dreams become a medium through which to access the supernatural realm, is the most important development in Coleridge’s consideration of space and dreams, as it has a remarkable impact upon the development of fantastic literature and the inquiry into the supernatural over the nineteenth century, and it is the motif that would become the most directly influential upon later literary and scientific explorations of supernatural spaces and, eventually, hyperspace.

Coleridge had long considered the supernatural or spiritual significance of the vastness of space in the universe. Importantly, in a letter to Poole describing his childhood, he relates his early association of ‘the Vast’ and the perception of it that stemmed from a kind of ‘knowing’ that lay deeper than his senses, with his early love of fantastic literature:

my father was fond of me, & used to take me on his knee, and hold long conversations with me. I remember, that at eight years old I walked with him one winter evening from a farmer’s house, a mile from Ottery - & he told me the names of the stars – and how Jupiter was a thousand times larger than our world – and that the other twinkling stars were Suns that had worlds rolling around them - & when I came home, he shewed me how they rolled round - /. I heard him with a profound delight & admiration; but without the least mixture of wonder or incredulity. For from my early reading of Faery Tales, & Genii etc. etc. – my mind had been habituated *to the Vast* - & I never regarded *my senses* in any way as the criteria of my belief. (*Letters* 1.354)¹¹

The parallel that Coleridge draws between an awareness of ‘the Vast’ and the experience of reading ‘Faery Tales’ suggests two important meanings: firstly, that one could be elevated to

¹¹ Coleridge continues his letter with an important defence of the marvellous in literature and the power it gives to appreciate the whole: ‘I regulated all my creeds by my conceptions, not by my *sight*, even at that age. Should children be permitted to read romances, and relations of giants and magicians and genii? I know all that has been said against it; but I have formed my faith in the affirmative. I know no other way of giving the mind a love of the Great and the Whole. Those who have been led to the same truths step by step, through the constant testimony of their senses, seem to me to want a sense which I possess. They contemplate nothing but *parts*, and all *parts* are necessary little. And the universe to them is but a mass of *little things*. It is true, that the mind *may* become credulous and prone to superstition by the former method; but are not the experimentalists credulous even to madness in believing any absurdity, rather than believe the grandest truths, if they have not the testimony of their own senses in their favour?’ (*Letters* 1.354-5).

an appreciation of ‘the Vast’ through reading imaginative literature; and secondly, ‘the Vast’ bore close parallels with the infinite powers and spaces represented in this literature – in short, with the supernatural. This suggestion of Coleridge’s innate awareness of ‘the Vast’ and its relationship with ‘Faery Tales’, and therefore the sublime powers of literature and the imagination, bear particular significance for Coleridge’s later philosophical and poetic work, and did not diminish in importance for the poet. In 1796, as he was composing *The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner*, one of his most ambitious, imaginative and supernaturally-themed poems, Coleridge was engaging with important philosophical and scientific works that dealt with the vastness of space. Richard Watson’s *An Apology for the Bible* seems to carry a similar sense of obliteration of the self against the magnitude vastness of space as the Ancient Mariner’s:

Who can comprehend the distance of the stars from the earth and from each other?...It is so great, that it mocks our conception; *our very imagination is terrified, confounded and lost*, when we are told that a ray of light...will not, though emitted at this instant from the brightest star, reach the earth in less than six years...But how *does the whole of this globe sink, as it were, to nothing*, when we consider that a million of earths will scarcely equal the bulk of the sun; that all the stars are suns; and that millions of suns constitute, probably but a minute portion of that material world, which God hath distributed through the immensity of space? (My emphasis. Cited in Adair 48)

In a note of 1796, Coleridge reveals his ‘longing to believe that God can still control these vast and remote spaces’ (Adair 50):

It surely is not impossible that to some infinitely superior being the whole Universe may be one plain – the distance between planet and planet only the pores that exist in any grain of sand – and the distances between system & system no greater than the distance between one grain and the grain adjacent. (cited in Adair 50)

More than a desire to be comforted against such obliterating vastness by a controlling God, this entry reveals a complex consideration of the notion of perception in relation to space, where the vastness of physical space can be transformed instantly by standing outside it in the space that Coleridge implies but does not state directly: the space beyond space from which the universe can be observed as ‘one plain’; a kind of higher dimension from which the laws of physical reality can be bent and diminished. Importantly, it is this kind of language that prefigures the descriptions of hyperspace that would emerge in the 1860s and it carries with it the same sense of the numinous and its potential relationship with the supernatural, or ‘superior beings’, that the spiritualists and psychical researchers would expound once the scientific and mathematical theories of hyperspace entered the public consciousness. The fact

that Coleridge here works them into his philosophy and poetry demonstrates the early presence of these ideas in the public consciousness and the way that these important notions of space and perception fed into the serious and poetic consideration of the supernatural that would pave the way for the scientific and literary developments of the century to follow.

Indeed, the comfort provided by peopling these vast and ‘empty’ spaces with supernatural beings was shared by Baxter, with whom Coleridge was very familiar:

How delightful it is to think that there is a world of spirits; that we are surrounded with intelligent living Beings, rather than in a *lonely, unconscious Universe, a wilderness of matter!* (189)

As Adair argues, this tension between materialist visions of an empty and spiritless world, and Coleridge’s own desire to sense the numinous in the vastness of space informs *The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner*, which expressed Coleridge’s sense of the ‘conflict between the transcendental and the material, the supernatural and the natural world’ (55).¹²

Coleridge’s conceptions of ‘The Vast’ seem quite clearly to correlate with his notions of the Sublime, which remained of consistent importance in his writing. As Vallins suggests, ‘no other British Romantic focuses so consistently as Coleridge on the importance of transcending the material, the everyday, or the mundanely comprehensible in favour of a confrontation with the infinite forces which, like many of his contemporaries, he sees as underlying both human consciousness and the natural world’ (1).¹³ Significantly, for Coleridge, the sublime was a confrontation with infinite forces (‘the Vast’) that could also be brought about by literature and the arts. Like the Gothic’s celebration of Shakespeare as the leading authority on the use of the supernatural in literature, Coleridge also turns to the great poet as ‘the pre-eminent example’ of the kind of ‘sublime genius’ that allowed the author to ‘transcend his merely individual circumstances and give expression to the universal, the permanent, and the infinite’ (82). Considering Coleridge’s conflation of the Vast with supernatural space, this concurrence gains special significance as writers, both Gothic and Romantic, turned again and again to Shakespearean formulations of the supernatural to achieve a sense of transcendence and legitimacy in their works.¹⁴

¹² See discussion below.

¹³ For further examples of and insight into Coleridge’s conceptions of the sublime and its relationship with poetry, the imagination and Romantic psychology, see the excellent collection of Coleridge’s writings, *On the Sublime*, edited and commentated by David Vallins.

¹⁴ See the discussion in Chapter Two of Gothic’s appeal to Shakespeare’s authority to legitimize works of the supernatural. Significantly, Coleridge also saw this ‘sublime genius’ in writers of Gothic fiction. In a letter to

Importantly, Coleridge linked the vastness of this transcendental space with dreams, which, he believed, provided a way for the mind to access this alternative space from which the universe – or one's life – may appear as 'one plain'. Indeed, this awareness of the transcendental via the vehicle of dreams is expressed also in 1796 in a sonnet on the birth of his son Hartley, which was included in a letter to Poole:

Oft of some unknown Past such Fancies roll
Swift o'er my brain, as make the Present seem,
For a brief moment, like a most strange dream
When, not unconscious that she dreamt, the Soul
Questions herself in sleep! and Some have said
We liv'd ere yet this fleshly robe we wore. (*Letters* 1.246)

As the mind lies semi-conscious in dream, it seems to step outside itself – outside its ordinary material life – into a beyond-space from which it can view a much broader life-span – like the broader view of the universe's 'one plain' – where the 'Present' suddenly takes on a fleeting appearance in the face of the vast reality it has endured before its earthly life, and will continue to endure after death.¹⁵ Importantly, this representation of 'the Vast' as a kind of 'beyond' space prefigures the later developments of hyperspace in the late-nineteenth century, while its construction as a space accessible via the dreaming state, and thus the dreaming state imagined as a liminal space itself – a kind of portal into this space – prefigures what can be considered the single most important aspect of Coleridge's thought as far as the evolution of modern fantasy literature is concerned: the overlap he perceived and poetically explored, between the space of dreams and the spaces of the supernatural.

COLERIDGE, DREAM SPACE & THE SUPERNATURAL

It is important to note that while Coleridge had no single coherent theory on dreams or the supernatural, his public and private works, taken together, constitute a life-long obsession with the kinds of alternative spaces that would begin to haunt the later Victorian writers: the

Robert Southey in November 1794, Coleridge describes the terror he experienced upon first reading Schiller's "Robbers" (an experience that he would also compose a poem about entitled "To the Author of "The Robbers""), in which he is so moved as to compare Schiller to Milton: 'Why have we ever called Milton sublime?' (*Letters* 1.122).

¹⁵ Several critics have examined Coleridge's focus upon the concept of the soul's pre-existence throughout his life. See Adair 54-55.

liminal realms of dreams and the supernatural.¹⁶ It is also worth keeping in mind the fact that Coleridge was developing his theories of dreams and dreaming in an era where the mind was only beginning to be located in the brain, and theories of dreaming were just as likely to be debated in spiritual as physiological terms.¹⁷ Ford asserts that ‘in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, there was no consensus on the origin and meaning of dreams’ (9) and ‘modern explanations of dreams...nestled uneasily with persistent traditions of superstition and folklore’ (14).

The wide and varied approaches to dreams in the Romantic era, and in particular, the question of where dreams originated, can be summarised into four main types: internal-physical, where dreams were caused by disease of the body or certain kinds of ingested food; internal-psychological, where dreams were purely a psychological product of the imagination, and in some theories, meaningless and more akin to the runoff of a resting mind; external-physical, where dreams were caused by disturbed sleep occasioned by changes in the sleeper’s environment; and finally, external-spiritual, in which dreams were caused by the influence of supernatural beings. Coleridge entertained all of these approaches at various points in his lifetime, often at the same time and not always in easy harmony with one another.¹⁸ Coburn has called the ‘richness and variety of Coleridge’s notes on sleep and dreaming’ a ‘subject in itself’ (20), and Coleridge’s engagement with the many different approaches to dreams have been treated in detail by Ford and Richardson in particular. The key fact that allowed debate on the nature and origin of dreams to continue long into the nineteenth century was that these phenomena, just like the supernatural, could not be accessed and proven empirically in a way that satisfied everybody’s different experiences of dreaming. This was a problem Coleridge

¹⁶ While this idea is supported by scholars such as Ford and Richardson, others disagree. Kimball makes a point of opposing ‘the conclusion of Jennifer Ford’s study,’ and maintains ‘that Coleridge’s statements on dreams cohere into a purposeful theory. This theory, however, has little to do with dream meaning and everything to do with dream method’ (80). Kimball’s approach is limited, however, to Coleridge’s ideas concerning only the medical origin of dreams, a conclusion that can only be arrived at by ignoring the extensive evidence of his persistent engagement with notions of supernatural inspiration, which her article does. See below for a discussion of Coleridge’s conflicting ideas of dreams and their relationship with the supernatural.

¹⁷ Richardson explains that ‘only in the Romantic era...was the brain definitively established as the organ of thought, although this seemingly inevitable notion would continue to be challenged on religious and other grounds well into the 1820s’ (1).

¹⁸ In her seminal study, Ford details the way that for Coleridge, ‘dreams and dreaming were topics which attracted intense scrutiny and endless conversational exchange’ and ‘the subject was a frequent topic at dinner parties...Dreams for him were very physical, bodily experiences, and at time pathological – even though he used them to symbolize the powers of the poetic imagination. The imagination was not, then, merely the evoker of sublime dream visions, as noted by Charles Lamb and many others: in essence...the Coleridgean imagination also partook of a corporeal, physiological and often diseased existence. In the earliest of his notebook dream writings, Coleridge presents his dreams as intimately connected with his (diseased) bodily processes’ (5). A similar approach was held by Thomas Hobbes, who believed that ‘cold doth in the same manner generate fear in those that sleep, and causeth them to dream of ghosts, and to have phantasms of horror and danger’ (cited in Ford 15).

consistently came up against as he continued to find fault again and again with the theories of other thinkers that did not match up to his own very personal and to him, deeply significant, experiences of dreaming. However, as diverse and troubled as Coleridge's engagement with dreams was, with respect to the mounting spirit of investigation into the nature of space and reality, particularly at its intersection with the perceived spaces of the supernatural, a persistent trend can be observed in Coleridge's dream writings that also illuminates a powerful impetus for such supernatural investigation in his most enduring poetic works.

Coleridge engaged in extraordinary detail with the opinions and arguments put forward by ancient and contemporary thinkers to arrive at several key ideas that would continually haunt his theories and his poetry for the rest of his life, and likewise continue to haunt those writers of later generations who were also investigating the nature of space, reality and the supernatural. The first is that dreams occur within their own unique space, which he called 'Somnial or Morphean Space' (*Notebooks* 4.5360) – a space which for Coleridge occurred at times within the mind, at others within the physical world, and often in both at once in a way that clearly mimics the properties afforded to supernatural space by his contemporaries. The second is that this space was governed by narrative and was peopled by 'dramatic' personas – imagined, taken from real life or supernaturally inspired – that meant that dreams behaved like dramas: a theatrical space with clear links to the imagined supernatural spaces enacted within the Gothic theatrical expression of the supernatural. This clear overlap between Coleridge's 'Morphean space' and the Gothic space of the supernatural was one that the author himself perceived, particularly when it came to that dreaming phenomena that caused him the most anxiety over the course of his life: his nightmares. For it was within this overlap, combined with contemporary debate over the origin and nature of dreams, that Coleridge arrived at his third and most troubling notion: the idea that where the spaces of dreams and the supernatural realm overlapped, not only could the supernatural be accessed by the human mind (and thus dreams would provide a way for the supernatural to be explored and investigated), but the human mind might conversely be accessed – even taken over and possessed – by the supernatural beings that existed within this space.

The liminal space occupied by dreams could thus become a gateway for access to and from the supernatural, and it is interesting to note in this context the traditional association since antiquity of madness with demonic possession: an idea which clearly held poetic power for a Romantic writer such as Coleridge. These three developments taken together – the imagining of dreams as dramatic spatial portals through which the supernatural 'other world' could be

accessed and by which the supernatural could enter the human psyche in the form of possession – constitute the single most important development in the transition of supernatural space in the late-eighteenth-century imagination to the narrative and psychological significance it would develop from the time of Coleridge onwards as it was expressed through the steadily growing fantastic literature.

What is most interesting about Coleridge's theorizing about dreams and dreaming is the importance he placed on the spatial characteristics of such mental states, and the significant implications this bears upon prevailing notions of the supernatural. His 'earliest dream writings indicate his strong belief that dreams occupy a very specific, and very private, space within the mind,' (Ford 38): 'the initial moments of falling asleep and beginning a dream stand for Coleridge as the most accessible illustrations of the mind's ability to house and to experience a space for dreaming: a "somnial space" where in order to fall, sink or drop down to sleep, the dream requires 'a place *to be* within the mind' (Ford 40). Importantly, this spatial construction of dreams involved not only an imagined mental space, but also a physical spatial reality. Ford argues that conceptions of the mind's physical existence were not unusual in Romantic thinking (38) and 'Coleridge often describes the experience of falling asleep as requiring the dreamer to enter into the physical and psychological space of the dream', referring to this space in 1805 as 'the other side of the confine of Dozing' (39). As Ford notes, 'the idea expressed in passing from one side of consciousness to another may be a common one, but what is ultimately being expressed is that the dream belongs to another "confine", to another place within the mind' (39). These important observations are made more significant when one considers that the bending of traditional spatial laws is already apparent in this construction of the physical reality of mental space, where the infinite realms of dreams were seen paradoxically as only one component of the space of the mind, and these infinite spaces together existed as part of, and hence within, the space of the natural world.¹⁹ Yet, still further, Coleridge's conception of mental space posited dreams as being able to access 'beyond' the natural world – beyond the traditional limits of human perception – to 'the Vast', and, potentially, the supernatural.

Interestingly, one of the main ways in which Coleridge conceived this unique dreaming space was through the metaphor of the theatre, where dreams are seen as 'dramas' that are enacted

¹⁹ See Richardson for a detailed analysis of the impact that such ideas, which bore resemblance to the 'widely disseminated, politically charged, and ideologically suspect...new materialist and naturalistic models of mind', had in 'a period of revolution and reaction, when to challenge orthodox notions of the mind and soul meant implicitly to challenge the social order' (2).

upon the ‘stage’ of Morphean Space and are peopled with ‘*dramatis personae*’ (a term which by 1827 had been changed to ‘*dreamatis personae*, to further highlight the important connection between theatre and dream) (Ford 33).²⁰ For Coleridge, ‘the most essential quality likening dreams to drama was that both required the suspension of volition’ and according to his writing, he believed that ‘the illusory qualities inherent in watching a play are similar to the illusory qualities of a dream’ (33).²¹ Looking even closer, we can perceive that this important metaphor has three key components: the presence of sensory illusion, suspension of disbelief and/or volition, and a unique, dedicated space – a world-within-worlds – both within and yet beyond the space of the everyday waking world.

As has been discussed in the previous chapters, this metaphor, with the same tripartite construction, was also routinely applied by writers from the mid-eighteenth century onward to the Gothic aesthetic and its experience and evocation of supernatural space.²² For someone as well read as Coleridge, the use of this metaphor is no coincidence. Coleridge’s connections with the Gothic have already been shown, and it is in light of his awareness of and engagement with the Gothic aesthetic that his choice of this particular metaphor must be understood. In this light, its significance is dual: it serves to illustrate not only the separate, psychological and self-contained nature of Coleridge’s dreaming space and its distancing from the perception of the dreamer, but also the important parallel that can be observed quite early in Coleridge’s thought, and indeed, which he appears to be making himself, between the space he imagined for his dreams, and that of the supernatural.

Indeed, the metaphor of the theatre was not the only connection that Coleridge’s ideas about dreaming had with Gothic constructions of supernatural space. Quite often, the terms Coleridge felt most appropriate for describing the qualities of Morphean Space were taken

²⁰ Ford notes the closeness of this correlation when Coleridge not only described his dreams as being ‘like’ dramas, but ‘often saw his dreams *as* dramas’ (36).

²¹ Noting the lack of surprise inherent in dreams and likening dreams to theatre were two areas where Coleridge’s ideas accorded with the works of Erasmus Darwin, whose works *Zoonomia, or the Laws of Organic Life* (1794-6) and *The Botanic Garden* (4th ed. 1799) contained ‘many examples of popular eighteenth century dream psychology and physiology’ and yet whom Coleridge disagreed with on most other counts, branding them ‘examples of inadequate dream theorising’ (Ford 22-3). Ford notes that ‘from his earliest recorded thoughts on dreams, Coleridge considered the suspension of volition as one of the fundamental qualities of dreaming’ (33). Further, ‘in notes to *The Tempest*, Coleridge argues that a dreamer cannot take the dream for reality because the comparative powers of the will and volition are suspended, and no judgement “either way” on the often bizarre occurrences within dreams is possible. The “highest” example of the suspension of disbelief is found in dreaming states’ (33-4). It is clear from Coleridge’s descriptions that this suspension of disbelief – this inability to make a judgement ‘either way’ – parallels the hesitation that accompanies the reception of the supernatural and the fantastic in literature, and represents yet another way that the space of dreaming occupied that same liminal space as the supernatural as far as judgements on reality were concerned.

²² See Chapter Two’s discussion of the Gothic metaphor of the theatre as it was applied to the supernatural.

directly from the prevailing Gothic and folkloric constructions of the supernatural ‘other world’. In 1802, Coleridge’s poem ‘The Picture; or the Lover’s Resolution’, first published in *The Morning Post*, described the dream world as a ‘phantom-world’. Similarly, in a notebook entry of 1803, Coleridge describes the process of falling asleep in both spatial and supernatural terms, highlighting the correlations that had long been assumed in traditional folklore and would come to be adopted in popular literary representations of the fantastic, between the state of dreaming and the supernatural or spiritual ‘realm’ of Faery Land:

O then as I first sink on the pillow, as if Sleep had indeed a material *realm*, as if when I sank on my pillow, I was entering that region & realised Faery Land of Sleep – O then what visions have I had, what dreams....& I sink down the waters, thro’ Seas & Seas – yet warm, yet a Spirit. (*Notebooks* 1.1718)²³

Coleridge’s spatial construction of dreams as a ‘material *realm*’ – a ‘realised Faery Land’ – into which the dreamer passes both psychologically and physically, clearly echoes folkloric descriptions of the supernatural ‘other world’. What this passage and others like it clearly indicate is that both the liminal space of dreams and the liminal spaces of folkloric ‘Faery Land’ are considered parallel, even the same. The liminal territories explored in the Gothic aesthetic here acquire a specific shape and a specific entry-point: to access the land of ‘Faery’, all one had to do was enter the space of the dream.

Further, not only did Coleridge posit dreams within their own physical-psychological space within the space of the mind, but as one would expect of such a space likened to Faery Land,

²³ In the same year, Coleridge demonstrated his early conceptualisation not only of the mind as a spatial reality, but also of what later psychologists, particularly Freud, would theorise as the Unconscious, when he wrote of ‘man’, ‘how much lies *below* his own Consciousness’ (*Anima Poetae* 31). Kimball stresses how advanced this early conception of an active unconscious was in 1803, arguing that ‘few contemporaries had come this close or this early to the idea of an active unconscious mind informing both waking and sleeping creative energies’ (83). ‘The words *subconscious* and *subconsciously* are attributed to De Quincey in the OED as usages appearing in 1832 and 1823, but these concepts appear much earlier in the writing of Coleridge’, who, Coburn suggests, invented ‘such coinages to denote his growing awareness of gradations of consciousness, perhaps using them in conversation with De Quincey himself, in trying to dissuade him from opium taking’ (Kimball 83). Similarly, ‘long before Freud, Coleridge knew and articulated the dangers of repression’ (83). The significance of his spatial and visual metaphors of ‘sink[ing] down the waters’ is particularly significant in later Freudian and Jungian psychology, where water, especially the sea, is seen as a metaphor of the unconscious or subconscious mind. The notion of what ‘lies *below*’ the conscious mind is an important factor in much later nineteenth-century Gothic fiction, which often explores that potentially dark and frightening part of the mind that later psychologists such as Freud and Jung would theorise in varying ways as an important and active part of the human psyche (on the similarities between Coleridgean and Jungian theory, see Toor’s ‘Dream Weaver: Samuel Taylor Coleridge and the Prefiguring of Jungian Dream Theory’). As Ford notes, ‘the employment of a spatial metaphor here implies that the mind is unknown, and also potentially insidious and threatening: for what lies *below* consciousness may be noble and refined, but it might also be dark and brutish’ (38). It was also a spatial metaphor that De Quincey would share when he described the way that dreaming ‘forces the infinite into the chambers of a human brain’ (13.335), into which dreamers ‘descend...into chasms and sunless abysses, depths below depths’ (3.435). See Chapter Five for a discussion of De Quincey’s writing on dreams and their relationship with the Vast and the supernatural.

dreams operated according to vastly different spatial laws. In this way, dreams effectively operated as a world unto their own that not only mimicked constructions of supernatural space, but also prefigured the later theories of hyperspace that would develop in the mid-nineteenth century. In this somnial space, time becomes ‘suspended’, a fact that ‘fundamentally alters other properties usually taken as unalterable; once it has happened, physical bodies that are normally immutable in their composition can become fluid, creating the illusion of endless growth, as in Piranesi’s drawings’ (Ford 45). Coleridge referred to this property as the ‘transmutation of the *succession* of *Time* into the *juxtaposition* of *Space*’ (*Letters* 2.974). Further, ‘Morphean space was one which knew no boundaries and followed its own laws: on one occasion Coleridge described himself as flying within it’ and on another described his sense in the dream that he was ““immense”, gigantically tall and foreboding, towering over all’ that surrounded him ‘such that “the prodigious height of the vast Temples & Palaces” becomes tiny stepping-stones’ (Ford 43). Occupied by ‘terrifying Piranesian buildings’ that ‘readily appear along with other ghastly and Gothic buildings’ (44),²⁴ these spatiotemporal constructions of Vast and fluid landscapes, and their destabilisation of traditional laws of reality, clearly parallel those similar landscapes evoked in Gothic fiction, and mean that, often, Coleridge’s dreams themselves can be read as Gothic texts, or as arising from the Gothic aesthetic.²⁵

Like the Gothic texts to which it bore such close relation, Coleridge’s dream world was often populated with creatures of folklore and the fantastic. It is not uncommon for Coleridge to describe dreams where he had ‘a vision of a world of fairies and paradisiacal meadows’ or, in a more sinister vein, became ‘the victim of an evil creature’ who wandered ‘through the psychological, somnial space, threatening to claw him to death’ (Ford 44). The physical evocation of these terrifying, supernatural dream spaces and their inhabitants is palpable and bears great significance upon Coleridge’s worldview. For while this dramatic dreaming space was peopled with characters from folklore, just like the serious conceptions of and investigations into the supernatural mounted within the Gothic aesthetic, these beings had

²⁴ The presence of vast, Gothic architecture in dreams was something that Coleridge shared in common with De Quincey. See Chapter Five.

²⁵ The connection Coleridge made between dreaming and Gothic texts is also illustrated in his review of Matthew Lewis’s Gothic novel *The Monk*, in which he argues, ‘the romance-writer possesses an unlimited power over situations; but he must scrupulously make his characters act in congruity with them. Let him work *physical* wonders only, and we will be content to *dream* with him for a while’ (*Critical Review*, Vol. XIX [Feb. 1797]). In the same review, Coleridge presents what amounts to a defense of the supernatural in literature, so long as it accords with the natural extension of physical laws, ‘the extent’ of which, ‘we can never ascertain; and therefore we feel no great difficulty in yielding a temporary belief to any, the strangest, situation of *things*. But that situation once conceived, how beings like ourselves would feel and act in it, our own feelings sufficiently instruct us; and we instantly reject the clumsy fiction that does not harmonize with them’ (373).

their real-life counterparts, and it is the relationship between the real-life space of dreams and the real-life spaces of the supernatural that remained a tirelessly troubling thought for Coleridge.²⁶ For Coleridge, these terrifying creatures were not merely idle figments of his imagination, but were bound up in one of the many approaches to the origin of dreams that was debated at the time and which Coleridge himself was intimately familiar with: the theory of supernatural inspiration.

After a nightmare in October 1810, Coleridge describes the persistent struggle he endures with the terrible creatures that occupy the space of his dreams:

Dreams, or Creatures of my Dreams, you may make me feel you as if you were keeping behind me/but you cannot speak to me – immediately I heard impressed upon my outward ears, & with a perfect sense of *distance* answered – O yes! but I can – (*Notebooks* 3.3984)

Importantly, this description collapses or blurs some of the boundaries between somnial and waking space – between the psychological space of the dream and the physical space of the outside world. Both the dreamer and the Creatures that haunt him seem to be at once inside the dream world and outside of it, having an ambiguous reality as both figments of psychology or imagination and physical entities in the waking world. Moreover, the ‘Creatures of my Dreams’ are conflated with the ‘Dreams’ themselves, as if they are at once the dream, its creation and its cause.

Nightmare was one of the aspects of his dream theory that Coleridge found most troubling when considering the relationship between dreams and a ‘real’ supernatural, for the question that continually engaged him was ‘why would the mind willingly create such terrifying visions?’. In searching for an explanation, Coleridge turned repeatedly to the theories of Baxter, whose *Enquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul; Wherein the Immateriality of the Soul is Evinc'd from the Principles of Reason and Philosophy* remained ‘one of the most influential dream texts’ for Coleridge (Ford 18).²⁷ In answer to the question of nightmare and similar ‘delusions’, Baxter’s theory proposed that dreams were external to the soul and were

²⁶ That Coleridge considered the subjects of dreams, ghosts and the supernatural as related is indicated by his desire to ‘devote some future Numbers to the Subject of Dreams, Visions, Ghosts, Witchcraft, &c. in which I shall first give, and then endeavour to explain the most interesting and best attested fact of each, which has come within my knowledge, either from Books or from personal Testimony’ (*Friend* 2.117).

²⁷ Coleridge, who had read Baxter’s work by 1795, wrote in 1827, ‘I should not wonder if I found that Andrew had thought more on the subject of Dreams than any other of our Psychologists, Scotch or English’ (cited in Ford 18). Coleridge’s continued fondness for and reference to Baxter’s work over a span of thirty years shows that for Coleridge, throughout his shifting ideas on the origin, nature and significance of dreams and dreaming, the supernatural was at least part of the equation being considered.

‘forced’ upon it during sleep by supernatural ‘Beings’ outside the body. As Ford explains, ‘dreams presented to the soul during sleep are both strange and new, sometimes disturbing and frightening. The soul can never be without consciousness of acting or creating, neither can it willingly frighten itself. The dream visions must, therefore, originate from outside the soul’ (19).²⁸ In this construction, ‘scenes and visions experienced in a dream are *offered to* the soul by external spiritual beings who gain access to the dreamer’s sleeping consciousness. Because the body is resting, these spirits are able to enter the soul with relative ease, and they have substantial, if not complete, control over the senses’ (18). This idea may have accorded with Coleridge because of his notion that in dreams, the will was suspended: the mind could not willingly frighten itself because the will was inactive – a state that essentially left ‘control’ of the mind open to the kind of mysterious forces that inspired the terrifying nightmares Coleridge experienced over the course of his life.²⁹ This idea is reflected in several of his dream writings, one of which details ‘a completed Night-mair’ that:

gave the *idea* and *sensation* of actual grasp or touch contrary to *my* will, & in apparent consequence of the malignant will of the external Form, actually appearing or (as sometimes happens) believed to exist / and in which latter case tho’ I have felt a horrid *touch* of Hatred, a *grasp* or a *weight*, of Hate and Horror abstracted from all (Conscious) form or supposal of Form / an *abstract touch* / an *abstract* grasp / an *abstract* weight! (*Notebooks* 2.2468)³⁰

It is significant that Coleridge’s sense of a malignant and ‘abstract weight’ corresponds with the traditional notion of (and ancient word for) the nightmare as Incubus, inherited by the Romantic era via folklore and mythology, and with which Coleridge would undoubtedly have been familiar.³¹ In this popular idea, the terrifying images and the accompanying sensation of

²⁸ Ford suggests that ‘Baxter’s ideas on the subject remained well known for over one hundred years, but they had a mixed reputation among his contemporaries,’ some of whom preferred to give more credence to the emerging psychological or physiological accounts of the origin and causes of dreams (21). Note also the particularly spatial construction of the soul, where in order to have something exist ‘outside’ it, the soul must have spatial limits.

²⁹ This is not to say that the will was not present altogether. Indeed, one of the most terrifying features of nightmare for Coleridge was the fact that the dreamer remained conscious that they were dreaming, and yet were powerless to intervene in the dream or to cease dreaming. This terrible image of conscious paralysis in the face of horror lends impact to Coleridge’s concern with nightmare, and also accords with the parallel he saw between the state of dreaming and the theatre, where in both, the viewer is aware that they are ‘watching’ a production, and yet cannot exercise their will in changing it. In this way, Coleridge’s nightmares became a kind of ‘life-in-death’ that he would express most memorably in his poetry, particularly *The Ancient Mariner* (see discussion below). For further discussion of Coleridge’s battle with nightmare and his imagination, see Alexander Shultz, ‘The Dangers of Imagination: Coleridge’s Dreams and Nightmares’.

³⁰ Adair notes the particular similarity this passage, and especially its emphasis on the ‘malignant will of the external form’ bears to Coleridge’s poem *Christabel* (149). See discussion below.

³¹ Coleridge would have been familiar with at least two contemporary texts that refer to the nightmare as ‘Incubus’: J. Bond’s *Essay on the Incubus*, London, 1753, and John Waller’s *Treatise on the Incubus*, London, 1815.

paralysis or weight pressing upon one's chest commonly experienced during nightmare were caused by a demon – an Incubus – perched atop the dreamer in sleep.

Similarly, Coleridge's emphasis on the power of the 'malignant will' and the 'external' reality of the 'Form' in which it exists reflects his alignment with Baxterian theories of external supernatural inspiration. Moreover, that Coleridge chooses to emphasise the opposition of this force to his own will suggests not only the external reality of what he would elsewhere describe as 'the fiendish crowd / of shapes and thoughts that tortured me',³² but also its implication of the critical battle that was waged every night between the sleeper and these external beings for control of the dreaming mind. This idea was particularly significant for Coleridge because while Baxter proposed that the soul is "relieved" from such supernatural "possession in sleep" when it awakes, a more terrifying implication of Baxter's theory was that "dreaming may degenerate into possession" in which the supernatural being retains control of the soul even during waking hours. Significantly, in Baxter's day and continuing throughout the era in which Coleridge was exploring his theories of dreams and the supernatural, spiritual possession was one of the theories of madness, and indeed, both madness and possession remained popular subjects for Romantic writers.³³

This was an idea that provided 'a rich source of anxiety and thoughtful deliberation for Coleridge', whose regular struggles with opium regularly cast him into a terrifying world of nightmare (Ford 21). These terrifying ideas are ones that he explored most poignantly in his poetry, particularly *Christabel* (see below). Importantly, the very idea of possession is a spatial one, necessarily involving a contested space, and a space external to the one being possessed, from which the possessor originates. Where the contested space is the soul or mind, another kind of space again is required: a liminal, immaterial space that can gain access into the mind. In other words, where Coleridge conceived of the mind as an immaterial, yet still physical space in the natural world (and thus a liminal in-between space), its access from the space external to it required a similarly liminal construction: the immaterial 'beyond' space of the supernatural 'Other World'. In this construction, the physical component of Coleridge's dream theories gained a frightening implication where every dream (and certainly, every nightmare) potentially represented not merely a psychological battle with

³² These lines, taken from Coleridge's poem, *The Pains of Sleep* (16-17) are also accompanied by mention of 'the powerless will' (21).

³³ As well as Coleridge, this idea of dreams as possession is to be found in the works of Shelley, Byron, Crabbe, De Quincey and Wordsworth, to name but a few. According to Ronald R. Thomas, 'accounts of dreams and dreaming' in Romantic writing 'characteristically assume the shape of a possession' (21). See also Carter for a discussion of madness as a motif in Gothic fiction (16-17).

imaginary creatures who ‘threatened to claw him to death’, but a very real battle with supernatural beings for possession of his soul. These ideas naturally accompany the notion of dreams and other liminal states of mind as liminal spaces between the natural and supernatural worlds, and they are ideas that would only continue to grow throughout the nineteenth century as fantastic literature explored the potential consequences of these notions in more detail.³⁴

Yet notions of possession were not the only constructions of the relationship between dreams and the supernatural that existed in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Related, but bearing potential and subtle differences, were the notions of divine influence and prophesying via the dream state, in which the dream could equally be seen as possession by divine spirits for the purpose of imparting knowledge, or as access to a higher state of consciousness that amounted to something like Coleridge’s conception of the Vast and dreams as offering a way to step outside of one’s life and view the temporal and spatial realities that extended both before and, in the case of prophecy, after it. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, many texts were published that detailed accounts of dreams and visions as prophecies and portents of divine knowledge, where information, otherwise physically impossible to obtain, was acquired during the dreaming state. One of these tracts, published in 1795 and entitled *Wonderful Prophecies: Being a dissertation on the existence, nature, and extent of the prophetic powers in the human mind: with unquestionable examples of several eminent prophecies, of what is now acting, and soon to be fulfilled, upon the great theatre of Europe*, claimed that ‘THE wonderful effects of inspiration and prescience in prophecy, waking and sleeping visions, and other communications of the divine will and knowledge’ were ‘now the awful subject of public enquiry and curiosity’ (3), and that ‘Many recent prophecies having been accurately completed, leave us no possible doubt of its continuance in the present time; which seems teeming with such direful events as truly require supernatural light and information’ (11). Its statement that ‘few there are who cannot recollect instances of visions, or prospects of future events being presented to their minds while asleep, which they afterwards found verified. Thus the occasional existence of a prophetic power in the human mind seems to find a proof in the general experience of mankind’ (13), assumes a widespread acceptance of, or at least interest in, dreams as

³⁴ A most striking example from the end of the nineteenth century is *Dracula*, in which the supernatural poses its greatest threat through possession of the mind via hypnotic states of trance and dreams. It should be pointed out that literature was not the only medium in which this idea found expression; it was also treated quite seriously by many until quite late in the nineteenth century, where notions of madness were bound up with the idea of spiritual possession, and ghosts continued to impart information or inhabit bodies in reports that were continually reprinted, particularly by those connected with the spiritualism movement (see Chapter Six).

prophetic tools. This idea was later elaborated by an 1803 text entitled *The Theory of Dreams: in which an inquiry is made into the powers and faculties of the human mind as they are illustrated in the most remarkable dreams recorded in sacred and profane history*, which suggested that:

the dreams which have chiefly seized the imagination, and affected the credulity of mankind, have been those which appear to have been connected with impending calamities and death, and which, from the importance of their intention, have been thought to justify the supposition of preternatural inspiration, or of the enlargement of the divine powers of the mind, on its approach to the sources of eternity and spiritual existence', while 'a belief in the reality of such intimations has very commonly obtained. (70)

As well as indicating the widespread popularity of dreams in their connection with the supernatural, this excerpt indicates the spatial nature of this idea, in which dreams occasion the 'enlargement of the divine powers of the mind' as they traverse the usual limits of human experience to enter the space of the infinite – 'the sources of eternity and spiritual existence', or, in Coleridge's formulation, 'the Vast'.

Coleridge himself was connected with this popular approach to dreams, not merely in having likely come across many such published collections in his wide reading, but also in having had such an experience himself. Writing in a letter to Poole, Coleridge describes an event of September 1781, in which his father, in good health, had dreamt of his death and suddenly died the next evening. Yet to his father's alleged prophetic dream is added Coleridge's own uncanny experience, as Coleridge himself, who had been unaware of his father's return, was woken by his mother's shriek and said immediately 'Papa is dead.' In his own words, 'How I came to think of his Death I cannot tell; but so it was. – Dead he was' (*Letters* 355).³⁵ The experience of having just emerged from 'somnial space' before his 'divine' inspiration of his father's death would not have been lost on the adult Coleridge. Yet whether this experience for Coleridge represents an incident of spiritual possession, a case of overlap between the spaces of dreams and the Vast (with its supernatural connections), or merely a strange coincidence is unclear.

Such ambivalence about the relationship between dreams the supernatural is typical of Coleridge, who, quite literally haunted by his terrifying and Gothic nightmares and the notion of possession that they entailed, had not completely resigned himself to the empirical reality

³⁵ Significantly, this text is from the same letter in which Coleridge details his early awareness of 'the Vast' and his association of it with fantastic literature.

of the supernatural, and remained in an uneasy hesitation between his notions of the supernatural as accessed via dreams, and his terror at the idea that the beings from this vast space could access and possess his mind. One counter-argument that Coleridge developed to the frightening possibility of the real supernatural as accessed by dreams was to relegate these phenomena to the ambiguous territory of the psychological, where as imagined beings, they achieved reality and significance not necessarily as material constructs with an effect on the outside world, but as psychological constructs with a definite and profound effect on the reality of the dreamer. In this notion, the supernatural is afforded an alternative explanation where sceptics would seek to deny its reality: as far as dreams, hallucinations, trance-states and madness (all liminal states of mind privileged and celebrated by Romantic writers) are concerned, the supernatural is not only real but important to understanding the true nature of one's psyche and its perception of the world. Just like the theatrical performances of the Gothic supernatural, the psychological realities of perception are once again elevated to the important status of saving grace for the supernatural where it came under closest attack.

Coleridge's ambiguous treatment of dreams as both physical and psychological, and especially his observations of almost Baxterian supernatural dream-creatures in the same light, complicates the many accounts and interpretations he gave of supernatural phenomena in the early nineteenth century. While exploring the supernatural as a psychological phenomena, in particular, as 'another "species" of dream-related experience' (Ford 92), he seems to advocate both the existence and non-existence of spirits and apparitions in the same way that a dream could, for him, exist both within and outside of the mind.³⁶ There are many examples of such ambiguity, most of them detailed by Ford, including Coleridge's assertion that he did not believe in the 'existence of Ghosts &c' because he had 'seen too many of them' (*Notebooks* 2.2583), or that, with reference to a ghost-story published in 1810, and which he commented on in 1819, 'the impossibility of proving' that a ghostly apparition 'was not a Dream or Brain-creature of this kind, amounts to a proof that it *was*/' (*Marginalia* 3.212). As Ford points out, this 'non sequitur' approach 'allows him to simultaneously to claim and disclaim the existence of ghosts, thereby removing the difficult question of whether the irrational and inexplicable phenomenon belongs outside of the mind, or deep within it'

³⁶ Ford suggests that this approach, particularly for the last twenty years of Coleridge's life, reflected his rejection of empirical psychology and mechanical science in their efforts to explain the appearance of ghosts, spectres and apparitions' (92). Coleridge made many remarks attributing experiences of the supernatural to dreams, including his comments on the beliefs of the eminent supernaturalist, Emmanuel Swedenborg, which he attributed to 'a unique but identifiable dreaming state' (Ford 96). It does not follow, however, that this notion represents the unreality of the supernatural, nor the totality of Coleridge's thoughts on the matter, which are notoriously complex.

(92). In the particular species of dream in which apparitions appear and which is ‘somewhere between sleeping and waking, images and sounds from within the brain are “blended” with images and sounds in the environment’ and ‘it becomes extremely difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish an image from within the brain from an image outside it’ (93).

This liminal state of consciousness where the ambiguously psychological and physical worlds of waking consciousness and the dark, subterranean worlds of sleep seem to merge and open out into one another, is key to Coleridge’s philosophy of dreaming and the supernatural. Significantly, he describes these states between waking and sleeping as ‘the true witching time’ in which ‘spirits hold their wont to walk’ (*Friend* 1.140). The statement comes as part of a comment on Luther’s alleged sighting of the Devil in which Coleridge attributes it to psychological, rather than external, physical sources. However, he also makes the important philosophical distinction that is impossible to ‘really’ see ‘with the bodily eye’ what is ‘impalpable, unless it were a shadow’ (*Table Talk* 1.16-19). The stress is laid upon the impossibility of observing an immaterial object with the physical eye in the external world. This description carefully, however, allows room for the idea implied elsewhere in Coleridge’s writing, that it is indeed possible to view ghosts and supernatural phenomena through the psychological, rather than physical, mind’s eye, where they occur in that unique somnial space that opens up between waking and sleeping. From here, it is a short step to assume that dreams can offer a portal or a lens through which to view and access the supernatural realms being made popular by the public spread of ghost stories and the growing collections of folklore. Though Coleridge never explicitly says as much, or even hints at his own belief in the physical reality of the supernatural, he does at least seem to imply that the supernatural has a very real quality in psychological and symbolic terms, and, along with the dream-states in which it was found, it made a constant appearance in his poetry.

‘RATIONALISED DREAM’: DREAMS & THE SUPERNATURAL IN COLERIDGE’S POETRY

While Coleridge spent most of his life grappling with notions of dreaming space, supernatural space and the relationship of close overlap between them in his notebooks, journals and letters, it is within his poetry that these ideas find their fullest and most profound

description.³⁷ Though Coleridge's poetry has been analysed in many different ways over the centuries, it is only recently that his work is beginning to be seen as part of a serious and engaging dialogue with greater scientific and philosophical investigations into dreams and states of mind.³⁸ It is in this vein that Ford argues against the opinions of critics such as Paul Magnuson and sees Coleridge's poems such as *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, 'Kubla Khan', *Christabel* and *Remorse* as 'part of a wider contemporary debate on dreaming' (2).³⁹ Moreover, while some importance has been granted to Coleridge's use of landscape descriptors as psychological metaphors within his poetry, and his masterful evocation of dreamscapes, there has as yet been no attention given to the significance of Coleridge's exploration of dream space and its relationship to the supernatural in context with its crucial place in the wider social investigation into the nature of space and the supernatural that was being conducted in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The two poems that deal the most closely with Coleridge's notions of dreaming space and the access it provided both to and for the supernatural, as well as its subsequently implied problems with supernatural possession, the mind and perception are *The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner* and *Christabel*. Two of his most enduring and powerful works, and the ones that arguably had the biggest impact upon Coleridge's immediate contemporaries,⁴⁰ these poems express Coleridge's ideas about the relationship between dreaming space and the supernatural realm in poetic terms that not only clearly relate to one another, and thus indicate the importance and lack of resolve

³⁷ Coleridge himself saw poetry as the most profound medium in which to explore the deep intellectual and philosophical concerns he grappled with in his daily life. For him, poetry is 'the most intense, weighty and philosophical product of human art' (*Biographia* 2.126), while 'No Man was ever yet a great poet, without being at the same time a profound philosopher' (*Biographia* 2.25-6). The fact that he associated poetry with dreaming is well known and is encapsulated most succinctly in his referral to poetry as a 'rationalized dream' (*Notebooks* 2.2086) and later a 'waking dream'. Several critics have noted the importance of Coleridge's poetry in relation to his theories on dreaming: Toor in particular argues that critics such as Halmi and Miall, when perceiving the absence of a coherent theory of dreaming in Coleridge's notebooks and journals, 'repeatedly overlook the burden of proof lying in the poetry before them' (83).

³⁸ See for example the studies by Ford, Richardson and Toor.

³⁹ While Ford touches upon these poems, her focus is less on literary analysis and more on situating these poems within the greater context of Coleridge's deep engagement with the emerging brain sciences. See also Richardson's interesting and illuminating examination of 'Kubla Khan' and its introductory note as an early exploration of brain-based models of psychology and what he calls 'the most spectacular psychophysiological experiment' of Coleridge's career (47). Similarly, Richardson draws attention to the repeated use of the word 'brain' within *Christabel*, which, he argues, 'hints at brain-based notions of cognition' during a time where 'the use of "brain" to connote mind' was rare in English poetry; a fact which 'only adds to the avant-garde feel of a volume that challenged and perplexed its early readers' (55).

⁴⁰ Coleridge's influence upon later writers will be explored in subsequent chapters but his marked interest in the supernatural was enough for one of the writers for *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* to claim in September 1818 that 'Mr Coleridge has perhaps the finest superstitious vein of any person alive. The poem of *Christabel* is the best model extant of the language fit to be employed for such subjects... Indeed *Christabel* may be considered as a test by which to try men's feeling of superstition, and whoever does not perceive the beauty of it, may rest assured that the world of spectres is shut against him, and that he will never see "any thing worse than himself"' ('Some Remarks on the Use of the Preternatural in Works of Fiction' 648-50).

that Coleridge sensed in these issues as he would return to them again and again, but also set the tone for the burgeoning novels of the fantastic that would follow in the early 1800s.⁴¹

The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner is one of Coleridge's most lasting and often-quoted works, and the direct source of inspiration behind many later Gothic and Romantic works of the early-nineteenth century and later.⁴² Like his well-known 'fragment', 'Kubla Khan', the poem was purported to be inspired by a dream: only this time the dream was not Coleridge's own, but that of his friend, Cruikshank, who 'fancied he saw a skeleton ship, with figures in it.'⁴³ The poem explores Coleridge's 'intimation of a transcendental world which approaches us in dreams' (Adair 55) and through which the relationship between the notion of perception and the liminal spaces of dreams and the supernatural is explored. It is one of Coleridge's most popular and thoroughly examined poems, and most critics treat in some way the obvious significance of the physical setting in expressing the poem's central treatment of the conflict between the natural and the supernatural worlds and its emphasis on liminality.⁴⁴ That the space of the supernatural and the ways in which the human mind might access or perceive it are central concerns of the poem is made clear by the opening passage in which Coleridge quotes from Thomas Burnet's *Archaeologiae Philosophicae* (1692):

I readily believe that there are more invisible than visible Natures in the Universe. But who will explain for us the family of all these beings, and the ranks and relations and distinguishing features and functions of each? What do they do? What *places do they inhabit*? The human mind has always desired the knowledge of these things, but never attained it. (my emphasis)

⁴¹ While 'Kubla Khan' may perhaps be considered one of Coleridge's most famous pieces of work, it has received so much treatment in terms of its obvious evocation of a dreaming landscape (in Richardson's words, 'a sexualized, amoral version of the conventional *paysage moralise*, a psychologized landscape that also suggests a dispersed, erotically charged body' [60]) that it does not require replication here. Moreover, its lack of specifically supernatural elements means that it cannot offer the same illumination upon Coleridge's perceived relationship between dreaming space and the supernatural, as can *The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner* and *Christabel*, which seem to be constructed entirely around this notion.

⁴² Meurs argues that 'perhaps the greatest poetic influence in Coleridge's life-cycle as a poet emanates from his own creation, "The Ancient Mariner", his own universally recognised "strong poem"' (44-5), while Prickett notes the growing interest in the poem as the century wore on by pointing out that *The Ancient Mariner*, 'in addition to re-issues and combinations, went through no less than ten different illustrated editions between 1850 and 1900 – the rate of publication climbing steeply towards the end of the century' (*Victorian Fantasy* 26).

⁴³ This story was transmitted by word of mouth from Coleridge to Wordsworth, and eventually to the Reverend Alexander Dyce, who recorded it in a letter to Coleridge's nephew, Henry Dyson Coleridge, which was subsequently printed in Coleridge's *Poems* in 1852 (383).

⁴⁴ For a recent examination of the poem's use of liminality with a different focus, see Gholami's *Politics of Liminality in Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner": An Anthropological Study*, in which Gholami treats the poem as a ritual in line with the anthropological theories of liminality and ritual proposed by Turner and uses it to gain insight into Coleridge's sociopolitical stance on the revolutionary and political transitions occurring during the Romantic period.

Importantly, like the witches in *Macbeth*⁴⁵ and the long-standing traditions of folklore, the supernatural in *The Ancient Mariner* exists in a kind of liminal space beyond the limits of the known human world, represented in the poem by the most obvious limit of the equator: a very distinct limit beyond which the sailors are ‘the first that ever burst / Into that silent sea’ (105-6).⁴⁶ As the sailors approach the limit, the landscape becomes increasingly inhospitable: either the cracking, growling, roaring and howling towers of floating ice among which there are no shapes of men or beasts to be seen (53-61); or, after the transgression of the Mariner in killing the albatross (which Lowes argues may represent a spirit of the water or air [234-7]), a vast, breezeless and rotting ‘slimy sea’ crawling with ‘slimy things’ and with ‘water, water, every where, / Nor any drop to drink’ (121-2). These descriptions accord with Coleridge’s exploration of the Vast and its inhuman, inhospitable spaces that he undertook in his notebooks, and provide a fitting setting – at the limits of the known and habitable world – for the supernatural to be encountered. And indeed, it is within this liminal and distinctly inhuman world that:

Under the keel nine fathom deep,
From the land of mist and snow,
The spirit slid: and it was he
That made the ship to go. (377-80)

The grand culmination of the supernatural interaction with the Mariner is the appearance of the ghostly skeleton ship upon which Death and Life-in-Death throw dice for the Mariner’s soul. It is when ‘The Night-mare Life-in-Death’ (193) wins possession of the Mariner that his immersion in the supernatural realm really begins, characterized from this point on by dreams and trance as he traverses the life-in-death limit between the waking and sleeping, and natural and supernatural worlds. Toor notes the Mariner’s traversal between the waking and sleeping, or conscious and unconscious worlds, characterised according to Coleridge’s concepts of the separate and opposing forces of the ‘Ego Diurnus’ and ‘Ego Nocturnus’: as the Mariner’s ship is ‘*dropped...Below the kirk, Below the hill, Below the lighthouse top,*’ it marks a ‘descent’ in which ‘the mariner (or the dreamer as the case may be) moves away from the established structures of the waking world to an extracted and separated state that exists below

⁴⁵ See my analysis of the liminal space afforded to the supernatural in *Macbeth* in Chapter Two. See also Bate’s *Shakespeare and the English Romantic Imagination*, examines the many ways in which the Romantic poets absorbed, appropriated, transformed and continued elements already present in the works of Shakespeare. This work aims to situate Shakespeare, rather than Milton, as the great presider of the Romantics.

⁴⁶ Coleridge, S. T., ‘The Rime of the Ancient Mariner’ (1834) *Coleridge’s Poetry and Prose*. Ed. N. Halmi, P. Magnuson and R. Modiano. New York: Norton, 2004. 59-99. All subsequent references are to this edition and shall be indicated by line numbers within the text. The 1834 edition has been cited because it represents Coleridge’s most recent revision of the poem. However, all references, with the exception of the ‘Life-in-Death’ scene, are substantially similar to the original 1798 version.

consciousness' (87). Via the emphatic and repeated use of the adverb 'below', the supernatural world that the Ancient Mariner enters is also a psychological one: a liminal space 'beyond' the limits of the everyday world that is both physical and psychological, and reflects Coleridge's notion that the spaces of dreams and the supernatural world could overlap. In order to traverse the limit of the conscious, everyday world and access the beyond space of the supernatural, the Mariner has had to 'sink' into the liminal state of the unconscious or dream.

The importance of the dream state as a medium through which to access and communicate with the supernatural world is continually emphasised throughout the poem. Even as his 'kind saint' takes 'pity' on the Mariner and begins to relieve his curse, the interaction and travel through the supernatural world is achieved through dream. Initially, the Mariner's living nightmare is relieved by the reward of sleep:

Oh sleep! it is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole!
To Mary Queen the praise be given!
She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven,
That slid into my soul. (292-6)

Within this sleep, dreams become the Ancient Mariner's access to the beneficial spiritual world when he dreams of his thirst being satiated with water and wakes to find himself nourished by rain:

Sure I had drunken in my dreams,
And still my body drank. (303-4)

Indeed the liminal state between waking and sleeping becomes the space that the Ancient Mariner exists in via a neat parallel with the similarly liminal space of the spiritual world:

I was so light – almost
I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blessed ghost. (306-8)

The parallel drawn here between the world of dreams and the ghostly world of spirits is obvious and is continued throughout the poem as the Ancient Mariner observes events that allow him (as well as, by implication, the wedding guest and the implied reader) to question the relationship between dreams, reality and perception:

It had been strange, even in a dream,
To have seen those dead men rise. (333-4)

Significantly, in the strange and liminal space between the natural and the supernatural, between waking and sleeping, the Ancient Mariner associates himself with the supernaturally reanimated corpses that steer the ship, including himself in the description, 'we were a ghastly crew' (340). Later, as the beings of the supernatural world decide the fate of the mariner that has ventured into their realm, the Mariner himself is placed in a 'trance' (429) as his ship moves through space at an impossible speed until 'swift as dreams' the Mariner finds himself back on shore (554), compelled to tell his tale. This clear association between the state of dreaming and access to the supernatural world (and even the transformation into, or possession by, a supernatural being in the process) provided Coleridge with a means to imagine the kinds of overlap that could occur between the spaces he imagined for his dreams and those he theorised for the supernatural.

Yet, while *The Ancient Mariner* explores the human attempt to traverse the limit between the natural and supernatural worlds – to explore, know and define the unknowable regions of that realm – *Christabel* seems to take a more inward approach to the same problem of traversing the boundaries between the worlds.⁴⁷ Interestingly, some critics have posited a relationship between these two poems as the male and female versions of each other, so close is their imagery and conception of the spiritual world in relation to the desolate sense of self of both the Ancient Mariner and Christabel (Taylor 708).⁴⁸ However, where *The Ancient Mariner* explores the human encounter with the supernatural in the Vast, *Christabel* takes place in much more confined quarters that seem to represent the inner chambers of the mind, and indeed, it is for the control of Christabel's mind that the battle between natural and supernatural takes place. In this way, *Christabel* most fully engages with the troubling notions of possession that Coleridge struggled with in his notion of dreams as a vehicle through which the space of the supernatural might be accessed. Further, it is in his ambiguous conclusion to the poem, which alternatively privileges the notion of the real supernatural, and the

⁴⁷ Coleridge, S. T., 'Christabel' (1816) *Coleridge's Poetry and Prose*. Ed. N. Halmi, P. Magnuson and R. Modiano. New York: Norton, 2004. 162-79. All subsequent references are to this edition and shall be indicated by line numbers within the text.

⁴⁸ Prickett could be taken to reflect a similar idea of the complementary but opposing forces bound up in the opposition of male and female when he argues that *Christabel* is actually 'the complete antithesis' of *The Ancient Mariner* because it works not 'by sequential arguments against the excessive rationality of the eighteenth-century system-builders, but by flashes that haunt the waking mind like the images of dreams' (*Victorian Fantasy* 79). Against the 'male' rationale of sequential language is pitted the 'female' opposite of haunting 'verbal pictures' – 'the series of powerful and interlinked images' (79). Most significantly, Prickett believes that it is this visionary quality within *Christabel* that renders it 'the purest exercise in the Gothic mode ever attempted' (79).

supernatural as imagination, that most poignantly presents the Gothic position of ambiguity between faith and scepticism for the following generations of writers who would draw so heavily upon his work.

Christabel was begun in 1797, but, after being rejected from *The Lyrical Ballads* by Wordsworth, it was not published until 1816, after which Coleridge claimed that at its inception he had been ‘preparing among other poems, *The Dark Ladie* and the *Christabel* in which I should have more nearly realized my ideal, than I had done in my first attempt’ (*Biographia* 2.6). Interestingly, Coleridge had planned to publish *Christabel* with an essay on the ‘Praeternatural’, a critical decision that highlights Coleridge’s pronounced focus upon, and attempt to partly elucidate, the mysteries of the supernatural within the poem. *Christabel* hinges entirely on the interaction between the worlds of the natural and supernatural, and waking and sleeping, which, like *The Ancient Mariner*, find parallel in a shared liminal space that is accessed via dreams, and challenges the nature of reality and perception.⁴⁹ Several critics have noted the poem’s particular focus on liminality, and have pointed out its emphasis on physical border-crossing, thresholds, and the meeting-point between the natural and supernatural worlds, as well as the transitional processes that Christabel endures as a result of her meeting with the supernatural Geraldine. As Hennelly points out, ‘the text of *Christabel* – from the framing announcement that even its sprung rhythm...performs transformatively “in correspondence with some transition in the nature of the imagery or passion” to its compulsive repetition of both literally and figuratively *crossing* or *passing* through “the space between” – maintains a much more profound focus on liminally transitional processes than has been previously noticed’ (205).⁵⁰

An example of the idiosyncratic Coleridgean way of representing this pronounced interest in liminality is evident in the fact that the entire exchange between Christabel and Geraldine is couched in the uncertain layers of dreams and the supernatural. During the process of this exchange, the bedchamber becomes a kind of liminal space between conscious and unconscious, where dreams become reality and Christabel’s selfhood and perception are both questioned:

⁴⁹ Taylor suggests that ‘Coleridge’s plan to publish “Christabel” with an essay on the “Praeternatural” may have aimed to justify his use of such spiritualistic traditions to render human emotions’ (708).

⁵⁰ While not specifically addressing the concept of liminality in as many terms, Fay nevertheless expresses this same idea when she points out Coleridge’s creation of a ‘suspension’ in the poem. She argues that *Christabel* ‘extends Coleridge’s signature posture of a lost-in-thought-ness clearly exhibited in both the bower poems...into a suspension of knowing’ (41). Significantly, ‘it is this suspension, echoed in the dis-tempo of the poem as a metrical scheme that refashions time and space’ (41). See also, in particular, Fletcher’s ““Positive Negation”: Threshold, Sequence, and Personification in Coleridge’.

With open eyes (ah woe is me!)
Asleep, and dreaming fearfully,
Fearfully dreaming, yet, I wis,
Dreaming that alone, which is –
O sorrow and shame! Can this be she,
The lady, who knelt at the old oak tree? (292-7)

Christabel's trance-like and somnambulistic state of waking dream, or, more appropriately, given the nature of Geraldine's possession of her, nightmare, forces her to question not only the nature of reality and perception, but also the relationship this bears to her sense of self. As a figure of nightmare – a supernatural force that seeks possession of Christabel within the dream-space of the bedchamber – it is significant that Geraldine only gains power once she is within this space. As Taylor notes, prior to entering the bedchamber, Christabel is the one who bears the autonomy and power, actively leading Geraldine through the castle in secrecy, past the doors and the guarding mastiff, and even carrying Geraldine over the threshold. The fact that Geraldine 'is dramatically affected by thresholds', as Fay suggests, signals her 'difference' and 'her embodiment of the time-space disturbance' (44).⁵¹ However, once inside the liminal space of the chamber, the poles are turned.

As a liminal dream-space, the chamber is also a liminal space between the human world and the spiritual realms of the supernatural. The setting of the poem thus becomes deeply significant in light of Coleridge's theories of dreaming, the supernatural and the nature of perception. The chamber operates as a tiny world opened up to the vast powers of the numinous – the spirit world – within the greater and outer body of her father's well-guarded castle, which is representative of the human world and the traditional laws of reality from which Christabel is drawn. In this way, the chamber may also represent a model of Christabel's consciousness: residing within the greater body that is subject to the laws of traditional reality, the chamber of her mind is nevertheless granted access beyond these laws into the realm of the supernatural via the liminal space of dreaming.⁵² Once in this

⁵¹ Fay does not go on to specifically address the notions of liminality or the supernatural in the poem, but rather examines the relationships between both Christabel and Geraldine, and these characters and the poet Coleridge, in terms of the Romantic adaptation of medieval troubadour lyric conventions. Nevertheless, her study, *Romantic Medievalism: History and the Romantic Literary Ideal*, is a useful one when considering the important links between the fantastic traditions being developed (or reworked) during the Romantic era, and their often surprisingly close relationships with the ballads, lyrics and romances of the Middle Ages.

⁵² The contemporary analysis of many Gothic castles and similar settings as symbols or metaphors for the human mind takes on especial significance in this context, given the analysis in the previous chapters of such spaces, particularly Gothic castles, as liminal spaces where the separate spaces of the natural and the supernatural meet. While the overlapping of the spaces of mind and castle is more specifically depicted in Coleridge's work, the connection with the Gothic is obvious, and Coleridge's work perhaps provides an ideal support for reading Gothic texts in this way. In a similar way, it is important to note the importance of Coleridge's work (among the other later Romantic poets such as Byron, Shelley and Blake, to name a few) in influencing the development of

dreamspace, the struggle for ownership of her consciousness ensues, enacted as a battle between two supernatural figures: Geraldine and the guarding spirit of Christabel's dead mother:

Off, woman, off! this hour is mine –
Though thou her guardian spirit be,
Off, woman, off! 'tis given to me. (211-3)

As has been explored above in relation to Coleridge's ideas about dreams and the supernatural, within the spiritual context of the late eighteenth century and particularly to Coleridge himself, the notion of spiritual possession via the dream-state is important. Christabel falls prey to Geraldine's power, seeming to gather 'herself from her trance' (311) and emerge as an 'empty shell', capable only of the vague and withdrawn actions of an infant: in other words, of a being not yet endowed with a sense of autonomy and agency:

Her limbs relax, her countenance
Grows sad and soft; the smooth thin lids
Close o'er her eyes; and tears she sheds-
Large tears that leave the lashes bright!
And oft the while she seems to smile
As infants at a sudden light! (313-8)

Taylor argues that Coleridge's 'interest in the formation of infant identity may inform the thought-experiment of the poem "Christabel"' (710) and indeed, in the final moments of Part I (where in May 1798 the poem initially concluded, until haunted by its meaning over the next fourteen months, Coleridge added Part II), it seems that Coleridge's ideas of identity and the relationship of self to other are crucial. In his *Opus Maximum* of the late 1820s, Coleridge, anticipating Lacan, notes the formation of a child's alterity at the moment where upon gazing at its mother's face it sees not a mirror of itself, 'but an Other, whom the child learns to love and subsequently to leave' (Taylor 710). Importantly, within the liminal and supernatural dreamspace of the bedchamber, it seems that Christabel has undergone a kind of reversal of this process: the figure of Geraldine, who represented such an unknowable and distant Other in the woods, battles with the spirit of Christabel's mother for possession of Christabel's identity until the crucial state of crisis in which these identities merge – Christabel is no

the Gothic as it would progress into the nineteenth century, in which the 'psychological nuances' of the 'journey of the mind' become a much more prominent feature (see Punter and Byron 13). It is also important to note that all of these writers were tapping into a traditional background in allegorizing the human mind via the symbolic architecture of the castle that extends back to Antiquity. On this subject, see Whitehead's *Castles of the Mind: A Study of Medieval Architectural Allegory*, which charts the evolution architectural metaphor in relation to ancient and medieval social, political and religious contexts.

longer sure of Geraldine's identity ('Can this be she?') and Geraldine becomes no longer an Other, but a mother:

An lo! The worker of these harms,
That holds the maiden in her arms,
Seems to slumber still and mild,
As a mother with her child. (298-301)

Through this process, Christabel is reduced to a state of infancy: a child reacting automatically to light; an empty shell without alterity. Significantly, Geraldine's possession goes further, until in Part II of the poem, Christabel's father quickly abandons 'his daughter in her mute anguish, and' instead, takes up 'her seducer and silencer both as his new daughter and his new lady' (Taylor 716). Christabel, on the other hand,

...in dizzy trance
Stumbling on the unsteady ground
Shuddering aloud, with a hissing sound, (589-91)

has taken on the identity of Geraldine's possessing spirit:

The maid, alas! her thoughts are gone,
She nothing sees – no sight but one!
The maid, devoid of guile and sin,
I know not how, in fearful wise,
So deeply had she drunken in
That look, those shrunken serpent eyes,
That all her features were resigned
To this sole image in her mind:
And passively did imitate
That look of dull and treacherous hate! (597-606)

Christabel's possession, likened by Nethercot to a vampiric transformation (69),⁵³ bears important connections with Coleridge's unease concerning nightmare and its relationship with Baxterian notions of supernatural possession. Tomlinson accurately summarises this connection, suggesting that 'One has in *Christabel*, in allegorical form, that same concern which tormented the self-analyst of the notebooks... "the mind's failure to guide the Will." For Christabel, bewitched, suffers simultaneously with the disintegration of personality the disintegration of the will' (105). As has been explored above, one of the most central and yet concerning ideas about the state of dreaming for Coleridge was the suspension of volition, which Coleridge considered necessary for dreams to take place. Yet this idea of the

⁵³ See also Twitchell's chapter 'The Female Vampire' in *The Living Dead* 39-73.

‘powerless will’ (‘The Pains of Sleep’ 21) was also potentially terrifying, for it is precisely this loss of volition, this ‘disintegration of the will’ that leaves the mind open to the terror of supernatural intrusion, and in this way occasions Christabel’s possession by the supernatural force of Geraldine. ‘In dizzy trance,’ ‘passively’ imitating Geraldine’s literally mesmerising expression, Christabel has fallen prey, through the liminal space of dreams, to the kind of dark, possessing creature that haunted Coleridge’s nightmares, and of which, for Coleridge, Geraldine represents the most fully realised and terrifying form.

As in his dream theorising, however, the terror produced by the notion of supernatural possession in the dreaming state induced a hesitation on Coleridge’s part to completely accept the empirical reality of the supernatural; a hesitation that he was forced to face when attempting to conclude his most terrifying of poems. The ending of *Christabel* continued to pose a problem for Coleridge throughout the many years he worked on it and his experience with it remains the most telling about his attitudes toward the connections between the supernatural and the space of dreams. In 1833 he claimed that the reason he had not yet finished *Christabel* was because he could not ‘carry on with equal success the execution of the idea – the most difficult...that can be attempted to Romantic Poetry – ...witchery by daylight’ (*Table Talk* 1.409-10). The point at which the supernatural, ghostly character of Geraldine is to be represented in the daylight, as opposed to the shadowy moonlight or a dim lamp, poses a problem for Coleridge, who has not yet consolidated a theory for such apparitions in the waking world. Geraldine has crossed the liminal space between light and dark, night and day, sleep and waking that she had occupied without trouble for Coleridge, and now awakes in the full light of day: a theoretical impossibility as far as Coleridge’s theories on dreaming and the supernatural were concerned.⁵⁴ It is this theoretical conundrum that drives Coleridge to refer to the Geraldine as a ‘ghost by day time’: a description of deep significance in the context of Coleridge’s perceived relationship between the supernatural and dreams. Most telling is the way in which Coleridge eventually resolved the ending of Part II of the poem in which he accounts for this anomaly by casting the accuracy of Christabel’s observations into doubt through the use of ‘(so it seem’d)’ in parentheses (368). While Ford does not analyse the poem itself, she does draw attention to the significance of these parentheses in the context of Coleridge’s wider thought on dreams and the supernatural,

⁵⁴ Fletcher emphasizes the importance of liminality in the poem when he suggests that Coleridge hesitated to finish the poem for so many years ‘not because no story could be machined to follow upon Parts I and II, but because the two parts had already adequately set forth their real terror, the threshold phenomenon itself, and to move along from their unfinished liminality would have been to destroy their perfect readiness by a useful, but merely conventional, narrative ending’ (153).

suggesting that ‘whether this is the poet-narrator or Christabel’s hesitation is not as important as the suggestion that what is seen is not perhaps an objective but a subjective phenomenon’ (98).

Within the context of Coleridge’s engagement with the Gothic aesthetic and its hesitation between the real and the imaginary (coupled with the Romantic notion that the imaginary is a kind of reality), this interpretation gains real significance and suggests something of Coleridge’s attempt to maintain the ambiguity of the liminal physical-psychological space shared by dreams and the supernatural. Once again, the supernatural is allowed to cross the border from the space of dreams into the waking world, so long as it remains within the similarly liminal mental space of individual perception. This ambiguous perspective accounts for Coleridge’s continued unease over the reality of the supernatural in the physical world by allowing the (potentially threatening) supernatural to be explained away as an individual psychological phenomenon, yet also allows it to exist as a very real (if invisible) aspect that can only be made visible to the senses under certain borderland psychological conditions such as dreams, trance and altered states of consciousness. In this way, this ambiguous resolution mirrors the previously discussed hesitation over the reality of the supernatural that accompanies readings of the fantastic and uncanny, and demonstrates most clearly the important stepping-stone that Coleridge’s widely-read writing formed for later works of fantasy and the supernatural.

It is this construction of the space of dreams, trance and altered consciousness as a vehicle through which the supernatural might be accessed, so deeply and vividly explored by Coleridge in his notebooks, letters and poetry, that remains the most important development for the continued evolution not only of the fantastic in literature, but also of the public examination of what would eventually be called ‘hyperspace’. Coleridge’s work in particular remains the most significant Romantic exploration of this kind of relationship and his immediate influence upon the writers working within the poles of Romanticism and the Gothic in the early 1800s – Thomas De Quincey and Mary Shelley in particular – ensured the continued reception and celebration of his ideas. This immediate impact will be explored in the next chapter.

AT THE LIMITS OF THE SUPERNATURAL: 'THE VAST' & DREAM SPACE IN DE QUINCEY AND SHELLEY

Coleridge's concept of 'Morphean Space' as a liminal space between the natural and supernatural worlds had a direct and profound impact upon the writers of the Victorian era. Contrary to popular constructions of the transition from the Romantic to the Victorian in terms of secular advancements and a general move away from the Romantic interest in the numinous,¹ the specific adoption and expansion of Coleridge's ideas by writers working across this liminal transition, as well as their specific engagement with the rising phenomena of phantasmagoria, mesmerism, and early spiritualism, demonstrates the continued interest that the spatial relationship between dreams and the supernatural held for writers of this time. While many writers were working within this tradition,² perhaps the most influential upon the rest of the century, and specifically upon the evolution of the modern fantasy genre, are also arguably those most influenced by both Coleridge and the Gothic supernatural: Thomas De Quincey and Mary Shelley.

Spanning the double transition of Romantic to Victorian and poetry to prose, both writers engage explicitly with Coleridge's ideas and contemporary scientific, supernatural and psychological contexts to forge a new step in the literary exploration of the supernatural, launching it headlong into the central issues of its day, and translating it into the prose form that would come to dominate literature from this time onward. In so doing, each represents a crucial step in the evolution of the modern fantasy genre. What we see develop directly from

¹ On the contrary, the developing Victorian atmosphere of speculative science and philosophy only increased this general interest in the supernatural, and questions concerning the nature of the soul and existence that had occupied much of Coleridge's thought became increasingly important in the light of new developments in electricity, biology, physics, psychology and medical science. See in particular the discussion of *Frankenstein* below.

² Among the writers working within the early decades of the nineteenth century, 'Shelley, Carlyle, Emerson, Ruskin, and a host of others were deeply influenced' by Coleridge; 'even Byron did not escape' (Craig and Thomas 9). Coleridge's profound influence upon the nineteenth century is perhaps most obvious in the second generation of Romantic poets, and to this day, Keats's 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci' (1819) remains one of the most evocative explorations of the mysterious liminal space created by the overlap of dreaming space (via a neat representation of somnambulistic or mesmeric trance) and the supernatural realm, with all of its connotations of madness and soul-possession. Keats was familiar with Coleridge's work, and when he met Coleridge in 1819, the same year *La Belle Dame* was published, 'he recorded that they talked about many things, including different types of dreams, nightmares and nightingales' (Ford 4). See also Barth and Mahoney's *Coleridge, Keats and the Dreaming Imagination*, Twitchell's 'The Supernatural Structure of Byron's *Manfred*', and the works of Ford and Griggs.

Coleridge's work in both De Quincey and Shelley is a deep and at times anxious exploration of the human engagement with 'the Vast', and its relationship with, and access via, dreams and altered states of consciousness, as well as its important connections with the supernatural. Through their unique and liminal blend of poetry and prose, both writers explore these notions in unprecedented depth and complexity, ensuring not only their contemporary relevance but also their longevity as literary and philosophical concerns throughout the later-nineteenth-century approach to theories of hyperspace, the supernatural and the evolution of the fantasy genre.³

Scholarship that recognizes the literary and historical importance of both of these writers, and particularly De Quincey, is relatively recent. Initially, De Quincey was studied more for his personal illuminations of Coleridge and Wordsworth than for his quite extensive literary output or his important role in the transmission of dream narratives into prose. Likewise, Mary Shelley was known more for being the wife of the celebrated poetic genius Percy Bysshe Shelley, or the daughter of Mary Wollstonecraft and William Godwin, than an iconic figure ideally placed by her connections within the literary, philosophical and scientific fields, to produce one of the most seminal works in the transition from Romantic poetry to Victorian prose fantasy. There is still much work to be done on these key writers, and an examination of the important ways in which they engaged with the scientific and literary contexts of their day, as well as, importantly, Coleridge's ideas of perception, dreams and supernatural space, casts light on their important position along the trajectory of writers that led to the evolution of the modern fantasy and science fiction genres, as well as the complex ways in which the writers and thinkers of the early nineteenth century were theorizing and imagining the connections between the mind, the supernatural and higher-dimensional space.

PHANTASMAGORIA, MESMERISM & 'THE "GHOSTIFYING" OF MENTAL SPACE'

Many analyses of De Quincey and Shelley's texts, while variously insightful in many ways, have been held back by a late-twentieth- and twenty-first-century anachronistic approach to

³ In a context of rapidly advancing scientific investigations into the increasingly complex and infinite spaces of consciousness and the universe, prose became the ideal medium in which to explore these ideas in minute detail. As such, it is within the medium of prose that Coleridge's notions of the shared hyperspace between dreams and the supernatural would find their fullest expression.

early psychology that overlooks just how inseparable the concepts of science and the supernatural, or psychology and the occult, were as general concepts to many thinkers in the early nineteenth century. While critics of Shelley follow the suit of early twentieth-century filmic adaptations of her novel, and emphasise, almost to the point of invention, the ‘scientific’ aspects of *Frankenstein* at the expense of its strong focus on the connections between liminal states of mind and the spiritual realm, so too have many critics analysed De Quincey from a standpoint of modern psychology that fails to account for the close relationship that the emerging field of psychology held with notions of mesmerism, the occult and the supernatural at the time of De Quincey’s writing, or the way that these themes were overtly expressed in his work through his reliance on Gothic and Coleridgean notions of space and dreams.

In the decades spanning the late Romantic and the early Victorian eras, much writing ‘sought to reveal a spiritual existence within or behind the material’ (Craig and Thomas 8), and engaged with the ‘belief...that the correspondence between the soul and the powers of the universe could be experienced in dreams’ (Burwick 4). Following the Gothic aesthetic and its pervasive links with science and philosophy, as well as Coleridge’s close relationship with major thinkers of his day, this interest in liminal states of consciousness and their potential relationship with the supernatural, and more particularly the notion of accessing spiritual or psychological truths – ‘the Vast’ secrets of life – via liminal states of mind such as dream and trance, was also increasingly pursued in scientific, medical and psychological discourses, from which Romantic and Victorian writers, like Coleridge before them, drew heavily, and to which they also contributed in the atmosphere of close dialogue between literary, philosophical, medical and scientific fields that continued from the eighteenth century. In this context, the notion of space, borders, frontiers and passing limits became increasingly important across all investigations, and contributed to the general focus on the supernatural, space and the mind within the public imagination as the Victorian era progressed.

As Knellwolf and Goodall explain, the changing understanding of space that had begun in the late eighteenth century with increasing geographical exploration was amplified by developments in astronomical observation that grew towards the mid-nineteenth century, which allowed unprecedented access to the infinite reaches of the universe (10).⁴ It was an expansion of space and spatial traversal that mirrored the increasing attempts, as the field of psychology grew in the early decades of the nineteenth century, ‘to map and chart the

⁴ See in particular De Quincey’s discussion of Lord Rosse’s telescope below.

phenomena of the mind', and to 'grasp the secrets' of the 'limitless' 'inner spaces of human existence' (10). In this growing field of interest, 'the inability to draw an objective map...provided scope for imagining a vastness of imaginary space that reflects the minute infinities revealed by contemporary microscopes' (10). The connection between the vast spaces of the universe and the infinite regions of the human mind is not merely a poetic parallel, because it was within the transition from the Romantic to the Victorian eras that the notion of access to the Vast as outer space was thought to occur via the liminal medium of dreams and trance - the Vast as inner imagination and consciousness. Several critics have charted a growing transition during this time from supernatural to psychological explanations of phenomena: a process that Castle has referred to as 'the "ghostifying" of mental space' (29).⁵ This process is an important one in the history of supernaturalism, psychological theory, and spatial philosophy, as well as the relationship of these areas with the emerging fantasy genre, because it privileges the notion, central to mid-nineteenth-century claims of spiritualism and late-nineteenth-century theories of hyperspace, that psychological perception is the key to accessing a supernatural space that simultaneously exists outside normal dimensions, and within the infinite reaches of the mind. This continued interest in the supernatural and its relationship with increasingly spatial concepts of mind is visible in three of the most defining phenomena of the early nineteenth century: the ambiguous theatrical space and psychological symbol of the phantasmagoria, the rapidly developing 'science' of mesmerism, and its relationship with the beginnings of spiritualism, which would go on to reach unprecedented heights of popularity and public attention in the spiritualist fervour of the century's final decades. What these three phenomena attest to is the growing importance of space in the nineteenth century's imagination, and the way that this space was formulated in ways that particularly foreshadow later theories of hyperspace.

Perhaps the most pervasive example of this fusion of the psychological and the supernatural is the concept of the phantasmagoria. In the early decades of the nineteenth century, the word 'phantasmagoria' connoted both a dedicated theatrical space in which allegedly real 'supernatural' phenomena were displayed before an audience by means of lanterns, silhouettes, films and various other techniques, and a psychological process involving a ghostly succession of imaginary figures or visions in the mind.⁶ This ambiguity between an

⁵ Kirkby calls this 'the progressive internalisation of the idea of the spirit and the spirit world – the movement from graveyard to brain function' (100).

⁶ Castle argues that 'the word phantasmagoria, like the magic lantern itself, inevitably carried with it powerful atavistic associations with magic and the supernatural' (30), while its 'association with delirium, loss of control,

external, theatrical, Gothic space – a representation of a liminal space between the natural and supernatural worlds – and a psychological process within the inner space of the mind, is particularly significant in the context of Coleridge’s thought on the liminal, overlapping space between dreams and the supernatural, and becomes an important metaphor for writers such as De Quincey and Shelley working within the ambiguous psychological-supernatural framework that Coleridge had initiated. Whether in a theatrical or a psychological sense, the phantasmagoria remained a space that one became immersed within, and in which one could gain access to visions of a supernatural nature, while the question of whether or not the phenomena represented external, objective reality, became increasingly irrelevant, though, importantly, was not completely refuted.⁷ ‘Certainly many people in the nineteenth century spoke of the “phantoms of the brain” as though they came from outside – as if there were, at the very heart of subjectivity itself, something foreign and fantastic, a daemonic presence from elsewhere, a spectre-show of unaccountable origin’ (Castle 59).⁸ It is this persistent presence of the supernatural, and its inextricable link with notions of the mind and mental space that led to what Castle calls ‘the pervasive crypto-supernaturalism of early nineteenth-century psychology’ (59).

While the phantasmagoria became adopted as a metaphor that could destabilise ‘the ordinary boundaries between inside and outside, mind and world, illusion and reality’ (Castle 50), such ambiguity and destabilisation of boundaries was occurring within the realm of science and experimental psychology as well, and was serving to elevate Coleridge’s notion of the shared liminal space between dreams, the Vast and the supernatural to new heights of popularity in the public imagination, while creating new contexts of philosophical and scientific theory for writers like Shelley and De Quincey to draw upon. In the context of the exploratory, speculative and cutting-edge science and philosophy in the first half of the nineteenth century, which was often characterised by its overtones of occultism and magic⁹, this ambiguous link

the terrifying yet sublime overthrow of ordinary experience, made the phantasmagoria a perfect emblem, obviously, of the nineteenth-century poetic imagination’ (48).

⁷ As seen in the previous chapter, following the writings of Coleridge, the notion of internal, psychological and particularly dream-based supernatural images did not necessarily indicate that the phenomena did not also exist beyond the confines of the mind and possess its own autonomous reality. Castle notes the ‘profound epistemological confusion’ that ‘derived from the ambiguous notion of the ghost. What did it mean, after all, to “See ghosts? Were ghosts themselves real or illusory? Inside the mind or outside it? Actual phantasmagoric spectacle...had enforced on its audience a peculiar kind of split consciousness on exactly this point’ (49).

⁸ Castle argues that ‘by relocating the world of ghosts in the closed space of the imagination, one ended up supernaturalising the mind itself’ (52). This process continued as the century wore on, until ‘by the time of Freud...the mind itself now seemed a kind of supernatural space, filled with intrusive presences – incursions from past or future, ready to terrify, pursue, or disable the harried subject’ (59).

⁹ ‘The early nineteenth century was a time when the magic and mystique of science was crossing paths with an accelerating succession of immediately useful discoveries, and it was impossible to determine which of a range

between the supernatural and the imagination was expressed more concretely as interaction with a very real supernatural world via the extended powers achieved in altered states of mind such as dreams and mesmeric trance. Mesmerism was a practice, developed from the theories of Franz Anton Mesmer in the late-eighteenth-century, which ‘combined elements from the knowledge domains of astronomy, electricity and magnetism, with interpretive frameworks belonging to the practices of clairvoyance and spiritualism’ (Knellwolf and Goodall 12). The direct predecessor of modern hypnotism, mesmerism involved sending a person ‘into a state of altered consciousness, or, to give it its Romantic name, a trance’ (Karlin 65) via the manipulation of mysterious ‘magnetic fluid’ within the body.¹⁰ Often conducted within a group or ‘séance’, mesmerism created a theatrical space around the sitter much like that of the Gothic phantasmagoria, but where the phantasmagoria implied liminal states of consciousness, mesmerism placed it front and centre. According to Winter, ‘there were many varieties of magnetic phenomena in the 1820s and 1830s, but each involved an “altered state” of mind, a mental condition permitting experiments on the nature and possibilities of perception, thought, and communication’ (41). Naturally, and especially in the Romantic context of Coleridge’s ideas concerning the relationship between altered states of consciousness and the supernatural, mesmeric trance came to be associated with the altered perception required to experience the spirit world, and even, in an early version of the spiritualism that would later captivate England, communicate with it.¹¹

The significance of mesmerism in the context of the transition from Romantic to Victorian thought is this ambiguous relationship it held with the spiritual realm: an idea that only grew as the century wore on. Far from illustrating a move from the sublime and supernatural interests of the Romantics to the secular developments of the Victorian era, mesmerism represents not merely the continued, but also the increasing, interest in the supernatural, dreams, and the potential relationship between them as the century progressed.¹² While

of mind-boggling prospects might become an actuality’ (Knellwolf and Goodall 8). Many scientific pursuits at the time investigated what are now considered occult phenomena, while many investigations that were considered occult at the time now form the basis of much scientific knowledge of the natural world (see discussion of *Frankenstein* and science below). Indeed, ‘There were strong elements of the uncanny about many of the scientific experiments that caught the public imagination during the first two decades of the nineteenth century’ (Knellwolf and Goodall 7), a quality inherited from the ambiguity between the supernatural and science in the late eighteenth century (see Chapter Three).

¹⁰ See Winter’s *Mesmerized* for further detail on mesmeric practices.

¹¹ Though it had not yet taken a firm hold in England, Coleridge would have been aware of the mesmeric phenomena sweeping the continent at the time of his writing.

¹² De Quincey also acknowledged the widespread Victorian interest in the supernatural in his essay ‘Modern Superstition’, in which he argued that though ‘It is said continually, that the age of the miraculous and supernatural is past...the popular intellect does not go along with the bookish or the worldly intellect...in pronouncing the power of the supernatural extinct. The popular feeling is all in all’ (404-5). ‘For one superstition

‘Mesmerism’s relative obscurity in the late twentieth century has encouraged the idea that it has always been a “fringe” or “pseudo-” science, eking out a precarious existence on the margins of science or altogether beyond its borders,’ instead, it was ‘practiced widely and continuously from the 1830s through the 1860s and beyond,’ and occupied a ‘central place among the preoccupations of Victorian culture,’ where it played a ‘pivotal role in transformations of medical and scientific authority’ and ‘became the occasion for contests over authority in science, medicine, and intellectual life alike’ (Winter 4-5). Moreover, mesmerism ‘appealed broadly across the social spectrum from the working classes to the aristocracy’ (Oppenheim 224) and in the 1840s and 1850s it was so widespread that ‘drawing room séances were an established part of its appeal’ (Karlin 66).

Its effect on literature was no less profound. Earlier in the century, ‘the Shelleys and their circle made mesmeric experiments’ (Winter 40-1) that would, according to Winter, partially inspire Shelley’s novel *Frankenstein*, while the novel itself would repeatedly be referred to in later advertisements and discussions of the effects and ramifications of mesmerism (122).¹³ De Quincey, too, found the subject intriguing, and in his essay ‘Animal Magnetism’ in 1834, he heralded the arrival in England of mesmerism, which ‘wore so much the appearance of a magical device’ (456), by arguing that it would open ‘nothing less than a new world to the prospects of Psychology, and...to the knowledge of the human mind’ (473).¹⁴

Much like De Quincey’s acknowledgement of mesmerism’s occult affiliations, following the more psychological revisions of mesmerism, such as those by James Braid, ‘by the mid-nineteenth century, mesmerism was no longer largely affiliated with materialism’ but had ‘in fact, started to embrace a view of mind that could readily accommodate spirits’ (Oppenheim 215). This connection with the spiritual realm came as a natural consequence of theories of soul and mind that abounded in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, which saw altered states of consciousness as a condition of access to the spiritual realm.¹⁵ In the deeper

of that nature which the Pagans had, we can produce twenty,’ a fact that attests to ‘the high activity of the miraculous and the hyperphysical instincts, even in this generation, wheresoever the voice of the people makes itself heard’ (443-4).

¹³ See discussion of *Frankenstein* below.

¹⁴ Mesmerism also heavily influenced many major nineteenth-century writers, including Dickens. See Winter’s *Mesmerized*, and Kaplan’s *Dickens and Mesmerism*.

¹⁵ Most important, perhaps, is Kant’s 1766 essay ‘Dreams of a Spirit-Seer’, which explores Swedenbourg’s ideas that spirits exist within a separate but co-existing ‘immaterial world’ (56) to which the human soul remains connected, though largely unaware of such connection. The key aspect of this notion is the spatial organisation of the spiritual world, and its relationship to the material world: ‘When a human being dies, the soul does not change its position but rather becomes aware of itself in the position it already occupied relative to other spirits in this life’ (106). Moreover, ‘the separation of the soul and the body consists in the *transformation of sensuous intuition into spiritual intuition; and that is the other world*. ...The other world is, then, not another place, but

mesmeric trances, the subject was gifted with ‘a new sense’: ‘subjects might claim to see events occurring in the future, inside the body, in distant lands, and even in the heavens. Often the mesmerist would loosen the experimental reins and follow his entranced guide through her mental voyages’ (Winter 3). The notion of accessing ‘higher’ realms or reaching beyond the folkloric veil into supernatural realms had accompanied mesmerism since its inception: ‘As early as the 1780s, at [Mesmer’s] own Parisian headquarters, patients had claimed communion with spirits of the dead during deep magnetic slumber, while in Germany and Sweden, too, where Swedenborg’s influence provided powerful encouragement, animal magnetism before 1800 quickly became an access route to the other world’ (Oppenheim 219).

In Victorian England, as mesmerism began to take firm hold of the public’s imagination, its supernatural overtones became one of mesmerism’s most intriguing and unnerving features. In 1844 Elizabeth Barrett Browning explained her reserve about the phenomena of mesmerism that was sweeping the country, stating that ‘The agency seems to me like the skaing of the flood-gates placed by the Divine Creator between the unprepared soul and the unseen world’ (219).¹⁶ It was this widespread privileging of dreams and trance-states as a kind of portal into ‘the unseen world’ that facilitated the astounding force with which spiritualism arrived in England from America in the 1850s, as well as the rapid growth it underwent throughout the following decades. As Oppenheim illustrates, ‘similarities between mesmerism and spiritualism in terms of their external trappings were particularly striking, and they received special emphasis from nineteenth-century commentators. The very vocabulary and practices of spiritualism after 1850 immediately called to mind the mesmeric sessions of earlier decades’ (217), and spiritualists would argue that phenomena produced in séances was caused by spirits ‘perhaps connected to the living by mesmeric fluid’ (219). So close was the relationship between the mesmeric trance and the spiritualist séance, that, like the relationship between dreams and the supernatural in the late-eighteenth century, towards the end of the nineteenth century the line between ‘contributions to psychical research and the emerging

only another intuition’ (15). In other words, the spirit world is *this* world, only layered over, amongst and within it, requiring a change of perception to see this ‘invisible’ layer of the world in much the same way that later theories of hyperspace and higher dimensions would configure their layered and interwoven spatial dimensions that would demand a similar change of perception to become aware of (see Chapters One and Six). In this theory, the nature of spirit is liminal itself: the animating force of nature, it is bound to a body in the material world, but retains its connection to that supernatural, immaterial, ‘beyond’ place to which it will return once the material body dies. For Coleridge and the later Romantic poets, to whom dreams were a way for the soul to be freed while the body slept, dreams and other altered states of consciousness become not only a way to access higher truths and connect with the ‘All’, but also, in so doing, become a way to specifically access the supernatural world.

¹⁶ See Karlin’s ‘Browning, Elizabeth Barrett and “Mesmerism”’ on the significant connections between the Brownings and mesmerism.

study of psychology is often difficult to draw' (Oppenheim 120). In June 1859 the *British Telegraph* claimed that 'the subject of Mesmerism is so intimately connected with that of Spiritualism that no apology is needed for occasional notices of that branch of phenomena', while later in the century, the Reverend Davies fancied 'that most people arrive at spiritualism via mesmerism', and E. D. Rogers 'insisted that his own "experiences as a mesmerist" helped prepare him to receive "the larger truths of the spiritual life"' (Oppenheim 217, 220-1).

ROMANTIC POETRY & IMPASSIONED PROSE

While the Romantic poets most obviously express the interest in the relationship between liminal states of consciousness and supernatural space in the first half of the nineteenth century, the period in which Keats, Shelley, Byron and Hunt held sway was also 'the last...in which poetry [was] more popular than prose' (Maxwell and Trumpener 5). As the Romantic era transitioned into the Victorian, literature itself was undergoing its own seismic shift from poetry to prose. As Benedict notes, 'whereas a mere sprinkling of new prose fictions was reaching the market in 1700, between 1800 and 1830 roughly eighty new novels were being published every year' (16) and the tide showed no signs of slowing. In addition to the ever-increasing number of novels published, were the rapidly developing magazines and periodicals that provided new avenues not only for the publication of fiction, but of scientific, religious and philosophical tracts as well. Indeed, it is in the transition between the Romantic and Victorian eras that print media begins to reflect most clearly the overlapping interests that had been occurring between literature and science during the previous decades of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. As prose became a dominant form for authors to explore the most gripping issues of the day, the boundaries between fact and fiction became ever more blurred. Now, not only did fantastic and scientific texts address the same subjects, but they also appeared in increasingly similar forms. Most important among these emerging magazines were *Blackwood's Magazine* (1817) and *The London Magazine* (1820) to which both Coleridge and De Quincey were regular (and competing) contributors. 'The significance of these reviews will be apparent when one considers that they were the means by which young authors became known and that much of the important prose of the time was printed in their columns,' while they also served as important mediums through which to publish 'works so novel or so ephemeral that publishers would hardly have been justified in putting them out as books' (Craig and Thomas 4).

It is for these reasons that, within the waning years of the Romantic era, writers begin to turn to prose to explore in ever-increasing detail, and a more expansive discursive mode, the concerns with dreams and the supernatural that formed the major preoccupation of the Romantic era. The benefits of prose were extolled by many defenders at the time, ‘Jane Austen’s celebrated defence of the genre as one “in which the most thorough knowledge of human nature” is “conveyed to the world in the best chosen language” being only the best known example’ (Benedict 16). The economy of form and language that had shaped Romantic poetry now opened up to the elaboration and close psychological and descriptive detail allowed by prose: qualities that made prose the ideal medium through which to explore the frontiers of the developing scientific, philosophical and psychological investigations in ever-increasing detail. This advantage of apparent psychological veracity was important not only in the context of the Romantic interest in psychology and states of mind, but particularly in light of Coleridge’s key ideas concerning the supernatural, which highlighted the importance of psychological perspective in considering the reality of supernatural phenomena, where doubts over empirical reality might be assuaged by the idea of psychological authenticity suggested by the Romantic notion of phantasmagoria.

While poetry and prose are often treated as antithetical forms, much like the aesthetic constructs of the Romantic and the Victorian, the shift in literary taste from the former to the latter during the nineteenth century was multilayered and organic. De Quincey and Shelley were two of the most important prose writers of the nineteenth century – one working within the emerging style of periodical prose,¹⁷ and the other within the tradition of the Gothic novel – and their joint liminal status writing across the transition from Romantic poetry to Victorian prose stands as a powerful testament to the fluidity of ideas across this boundary. Through their close relationships with Coleridge and the Romantic poets, these writers bridge the gap that the early Romantics sought to create between the Romantic and Gothic art forms, and translate Coleridge’s concerns with the Vast, its relationship with the supernatural, and its access via altered states of consciousness, into the prose form that would so powerfully influence the later Victorian fantasists.

Referred to as ‘one of the most magnificent of dreamers and most melodious of prose stylists in the romantic period’ (Burwick 27), De Quincey specifically bridges the transition from

¹⁷ Indeed, the period of De Quincey’s ‘activity as a writer is almost coterminous with the ascendancy of the English and Scotch reviews and magazines which exercised such an influence in both politics and literature, and to which most of the distinguished writers of the time contributed’ (Craig and Thomas 162).

Romantic poetry to prose in his proposition of an unprecedented merger between the two, which he called 'impassioned prose' or 'Literature of Power'. 'In this he tried to infuse prose with the qualities that traditionally are associated with poetry, particularly lyric poetry' (Craig and Thomas 162). Significantly, for 'the basic material of this kind of writing' he turned to the central preoccupations of both Romantic and later nineteenth-century thought: 'his visions and his dreams, of the day and of the night, whether natural or evoked by opium,' and 'presented them in a style which suggests their phantasmagoric character' (Craig and Thomas 162). His *Confessions of an English Opium-eater* (1821) and its later sequel *Suspiria de Profundis* (1845) are examples of this poetic prose blend, which Masson calls 'that species of prose-phantasy,' and, more particularly, 'dream-phantasy,' which were, De Quincey believed, 'the first example set in English Literature' (13:331).¹⁸ The value of this 'impassioned prose' for De Quincey lay in its ability to produce awareness of 'the infinity of the world within', unlike novels, which, he argued, merely 'speak to what is least permanent in human sensibilities' (cited in Duffy 9).¹⁹ In this argument, De Quincey's preference for his 'Literature of Power' seems to hinge on the ability of 'impassioned prose' to evoke the sublime, rather than merely entertain; a criticism that echoes earlier Romantic comparisons of poetry to the Gothic novel. It must be stressed however, that De Quincey's objection applies specifically to the novelistic prose form in which most Gothic tales were presented, rather than to the Gothic aesthetic itself, as the heavy Gothic character of his own work attests to.²⁰ This uneasy tension between the directions of Gothic sensationalism and Romantic 'impassioned prose' is evident in De Quincey's work, and De Quincey himself remained aware that his writing inhabited a curiously liminal 'limbo between literature as mass-produced goods and Literature as productive of imaginative genius' (Thron 5-6).

¹⁸ De Quincey's success in *Confessions* is indicated by its generally favourable views. For example, the *Monthly Review* suggested in March 1824 that 'The qualities of realism and exactness of style, analytic thought, and poetic feeling reveal a genius at work' (288-296).

¹⁹ De Quincey provided a similar justification for the style of his essay 'System of the Heavens' in a footnote that was added when the essay was republished in 1854, arguing that: 'If, through the light torrent *spray* of fanciful images or allusions, the reader catches at intervals momentary glimpses of objects vast and awful in the rear, a much more impressive effect is likely to be obtained than through any amount of scientific discussion' (8.8). For further insights into De Quincey's conception of 'impassioned prose', see also Patterson's 'De Quincey's Conception of the Novel as Literature of Power' and Devlin's *De Quincey, Wordsworth and the Art of Prose*.

²⁰ Much like the Romantic poets, De Quincey's work drew heavily on the Gothic tradition. Indeed, 'following Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's lead, scholars continue to read *The Confessions* as belonging to the Gothic' (Fay 295), and even treat it, in the words of Cannon Schmitt, as 'Gothic autobiography' (48). De Quincey, as a young man, read gothic novels almost continuously: 'Reading terror fiction was like eating and, most obviously, like sleeping: the same images ingested during the day were regurgitated in dreams at night...correspondingly, conscious life becomes a waking dream' (Clery 152). In light of this, 'Sir Walter Scott's comparison of the effects of Ann Radcliffe's Gothic romances to that of opium – pleasant when used occasionally and in moderation, harmful when used regularly or in excess – becomes curiously suggestive' (Crawford 241).

While De Quincey avoids such Gothic trappings by taking his Romantic concerns into the prose form associated with periodicals, Shelley forges new ground by exploring Romantic concerns within the traditional form of the Gothic novel itself, adapting and changing it to reflect a more Romantic aesthetic and designing it to address not the antiquated supernaturalism of ages past, but the turbulent scientific and psychological approaches to the supernatural occurring in the early nineteenth century. In the original 1818 Preface to *Frankenstein*, Shelley engaged explicitly with the prevailing Romantic discourse on the value of Gothic novels by distancing her own novel from such texts, arguing that, 'The event on which the interest of the story depends is exempt from the disadvantages of a mere tale of spectres or enchantment'.²¹ Importantly, the reason for this exemption involved both the contemporary setting and the potential scientific reality of its fantastic subject matter. As Shelley argues, 'I have not considered myself as merely weaving a series of supernatural terrors' because 'The event on which this fiction is founded has been supposed, by Dr Darwin and some of the physiological writers of Germany, as not of impossible occurrence' (267).

Likewise, an 1818 review for the *Edinburgh Magazine* noted that the novel 'has an air of reality attached to it, by being connected with the favourite projects and passions of the times' (249-53). This claim, and the uneasy ambiguity between science and the supernatural in the novel, has led critics to debate the novel's relationship to the earlier Gothic aesthetic and the later Science Fiction genre. 'Unlike most of the Gothic novels of its time, which carry on safely retrospective flirtations with feudal and Papal power, Mary Shelley's novel is set in the Age of Reason itself (in the late eighteenth century, though with some anachronisms which would place its action even later)' (Baldick 5). This same important distinction between Shelley's novel and the bulk of the Gothic novels applies to her treatment of the supernatural. Rather than couching her protagonist's meeting with the supernatural and encounter with the frontiers of supernatural space safely in the mysterious past, shrouded in the blankets of myth and legend, she places the action in a recent past: in the Age of Reason and also, as explored in the previous chapters, in the age in which the existence of such supernatural spaces and phenomena was beginning to be most closely investigated in scientific spheres. Her work is thus immediately relevant to the context in which it was published, and while many critics

²¹ Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1831) *Three Gothic Novels*. London: Penguin, 1986, pp. 257-497, p. 267. All subsequent references are to this edition and will hereafter be cited by page numbers within the text. Shelley's 1831 version has been chosen to reflect her most recent and independent revision of the original text, and for its liminal position on the chronological border from the Romantic to the Victorian eras. For a useful comparison of the intellectual contexts surrounding the revision of the 1818 text of *Frankenstein*, see O'Rourke's 'The 1831 Introduction and Revisions to *Frankenstein*: Mary Shelley Dictates Her Legacy' and Butler's '*Frankenstein* and Radical Science.'

describe Shelley's novel as capturing the scientific spirit of the age, it also stands as one of the first novels to capture the atmosphere of curiosity, investigation into, and fear of, what was genuinely felt at that point in history to be a very real supernatural.

Moreover, like De Quincey's hybrid works that blend the style and concerns of Romantic poetry with the developing prose form, Shelley's novel can be seen as representative of a similar transition. By tracing the novel's lineage from Coleridge's concerns with psychology and the supernatural, as well as the supernatural character of contemporary nineteenth-century science, Shelley's novel can be seen as a successful attempt to expound upon the Romantic concerns of the day in prose, and take the antiquated supernaturalism of the Gothic novels into the frontiers of early-nineteenth-century scientific pursuits; a task that allowed later fantasy writers to develop on these themes in what would later become Victorian fantasy. Moreover, in addition to this thematic crossover, like De Quincey's 'impassioned prose' and 'dream-phantasy', the style of Shelley's novel itself forms a similar bridge between Romantic poetry and Victorian prose. Sir Walter Scott's review in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* argued that the novel showed 'uncommon powers of poetic imagination', although it 'shook a little even our firm nerves' (ii [1817-18] 619), while for modern critics, '*Frankenstein* brought a new sophistication to (the) literary terror' previously achieved by the Gothic novels (Moers 216), by creating a 'narrative of excessive duplication and reduplication of dreamlike regressions and endless mirroring' (Mishra 215). Most interesting in this respect is Charles Shug's analysis of the close stylistic and thematic similarities between Shelley's novel and Romantic poetry, which poses the interesting idea that the best way to approach the novel is the same way one would approach a Romantic poem.²²

Interestingly, in their unique blend of Romantic poetry and prose, both De Quincey's and Shelley's major works utilise a first-person 'confessional' style, which was a popular style for exploring ephemeral and contentious ideas such as the journeys of the soul in dreams through spirit realms and their connections with the mysteries of life, the mind and its processes, and its intersections with supernatural space.²³ While the prose form in general offered the opportunity for close attention to detail, and unlimited space within which to expound upon a subject, the confessional form provided an added appearance of veracity by allowing direct

²² See Shug's 'The Romantic Form of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*'.

²³ The earlier history of the confessional style is here pertinent, with such precedents as Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders* setting the example of contentious literary subjects explored in this form. Shelley chose to couch the story of her monster in the double layers of the fictional first-person confessions of Frankenstein and Walton, while De Quincey's *Confessions* would establish him as the English master of the confessional form.

insight into the characters' thoughts and feelings, a fact that allows them to be explored in great detail, and acts as a first-hand 'evidential' perspective. Far from the artifice of poetry, this confessional style aids the illusion of truth in presenting what might be considered an 'eye-witness account' of events, particularly concerning marvellous phenomena such as De Quincey's strange and exotic opium dreams, or Frankenstein's monster and spiritual haunting. Moreover, where a third-person account might render these events slightly less believable – the construct of an unreliable narrator or an over-zealous author – the close personal feel of a first-person perspective allows the confessional tone to elicit a feeling of intimacy and private knowledge – a truthfulness that accompanies the sense of stumbling across a private diary or letter exchange.

In this respect, it is interesting to compare the reception of both De Quincey's *Confessions* and Shelley's *Frankenstein* with consideration of each text's addressee. *Confessions* is written by De Quincey with a wide reading public in mind. He makes no scruples to address it openly to a crowd of sceptics, medical readers and would-be opium-eaters, addressed directly under the term 'Reader', whom he aims to instruct in the realities of opium addiction and the dreams it elicits. In this sense, the text is quite self-reflexive, openly calling attention to its position as a conscious attempt to persuade the reader to take its elements as truth, a position which implies the possibility of the opposite opinion: the resistance of the sceptics. The fact that both positions are so clearly called into consideration for the reader – and De Quincey defers to this persuasive call to the reader repeatedly – perhaps explains in part the divided public reaction to his publication, which though highly favourable for the most part, included among its dissenters those who questioned the morality and credibility of the work.²⁴

Shelley's *Frankenstein*, on the other hand, is presented at a remove from the direct relationship between author and reader that De Quincey sets up by placing the first-person 'confession' within several narrative framing devices that work to obscure the role of the author in the creation of the narrative as it becomes embedded in the 'story-within-a-story' format. The initial framing device is that of Robert Walton's letters, written to his sister as a diary-like account of his adventures as he sails toward the North Pole. It is not until the fourth letter that we are told of Walton's encounter with the strange and forlorn figure of Frankenstein, who is pursuing his creation through the ice, and by this stage, the reader is set up to take Walton's words at near face-value. No strange 'incidents' have yet occurred (277) and the diary/letter format has gone so far as to include the minute and mundane details of

²⁴ See Dendurent's *Thomas De Quincey: A Reference Guide* for a collection of early perceptions of *Confessions*.

Walton's inspiration for his journey, his education, his efforts to secure a ship and crew, and details of the weather and his means of managing it, in an effort to secure the reader's belief that what Walter describes is accurate. However, it is with Frankenstein's appearance that the reader encounters Shelley's secondary framing device, as Walton records 'as nearly as possible in his own words' Frankenstein's long, elaborate and minutely detailed story of his supernatural creation and the events that followed it, and the whole account is presented as Frankenstein's own first-person narration (286). At a third remove lies Walton's report of Frankenstein's account of the creature's own dialogue: a third narrative at the centre of the text. Despite the fact that this story contains elements far more fantastic than those De Quincey was working with, its couching behind the remove of these narrative framing devices – its address not to a disbelieving reader, but to someone quite removed and personal – allows the reader to feel as if they have stumbled upon this story quite by accident: a feeling that allows its elements to be considered more easily with the kind of 'willing suspension of disbelief' that Coleridge believed was required to achieve poetic faith, and that Tolkien appropriated for his consideration of readers' experiences of fantasy texts.

This triple-layered narrative form echoes the layered psychological worlds of the monster at the centre, followed by Frankenstein and Walton at the periphery. Our closest link to the story, Walton becomes, effectively, a medium through which the thoughts of the deceased Frankenstein and his creature are conveyed to us, thereby performing the role of both mesmerist and mesmeric subject, as well as literarily foreshadowing the role of later mediums, and practices of thought-transference, spirit-seeing and clairvoyance that would develop from mesmerism in the mid-nineteenth century. In addition, this layering of psychological worlds echoes the layered and interwoven spaces of the natural and supernatural worlds, drawing attention to the fluidity of the boundaries between embodied minds and souls.

Even more interesting in this regard is the layer of framing, and rejection of authorial responsibility, added by the 'Introduction' to the 1831 edition, in which Shelley follows the example of Romantic predecessors like Coleridge, and places the inspiration for her marvellous story within a dream. Shelley's description of this dream gains especial importance in the context of phantasmagoria, mesmerism and spiritual possession that abound both in the legacy of Coleridge's work and at the time of Shelley's writing. On the night of the story's inspiration, Shelley 'did not sleep, nor could I be said to think. My imagination, unbidden, *possessed* and guided me, gifting the successive images that arose in my mind with

a vividness far beyond the usual bounds of reverie. I saw – with shut eyes, but acute mental vision’ (my emphasis 263). After her dream-image of the monster peering in at the bed curtains with ‘yellow, watery’ eyes:

the idea so *possessed* my mind that a thrill of fear ran through me, and I wished to exchange the ghastly image of my fancy for the realities around. I see them still: the very room, the dark parquet, the closed shutters with the moonlight struggling through, and the sense I had that the glassy lake and white high Alps were beyond. I could not so easily get rid of my hideous *phantom*; still it *haunted* me. (my emphasis 264)

After this, for her story, Shelley needed ‘only describe the *spectre* which had *haunted* my midnight pillow’ and make ‘only a transcript of the grim terrors of my *waking dream*’ (my emphasis 264).²⁵ This alleged scene of the story’s invention is as Gothic as the story itself, engaging explicitly with the contemporary discourses on spiritual possession, mesmerism and imaginative trance, while privileging the sublime space it occurred within, as if this landscape imposes itself with a force of its own, though it has been made invisible by the shutters closed against it. Like the moonlight, it filters through, asserting its sublime being while the terrifying phantasmic images haunt Shelley’s mind. The overlap between the supernatural and the role of imagination in mediating between these sublime spaces of the supernatural Vast and the mind creates the idea that the inspiration for *Frankenstein* was not Shelley’s, but was ‘given’ to her in a dream sequence that gains particular significance in context with *Frankenstein*’s spiritual dream-reveries towards the end of the novel, as well as the novel’s wider and more specific discourse on the relationship between dreams and the supernatural that Coleridge proposed, and which will be explored below.

INHERITANCE: THE INFLUENCE OF COLERIDGE, SHELLEY & DE QUINCEY

It is important to note that Shelley’s and De Quincey’s choice of the confessional mode of prose was likely partly inspired by Coleridge’s *Ancient Mariner*, which both authors greatly admired, and which, though poetic, is also presented as a confessional tale. This connection

²⁵ Glance details the stylistic similarities between Shelley’s dream and Coleridge’s Preface to ‘Kubla Khan’ (1816), and also suggests that De Quincey’s 1821 *Confessions* could have been a source of inspiration for Shelley’s 1831 Introduction. For Glance, these three dream accounts form a clear literary pattern that seems to have been in vogue during the Romantic era, and Shelley’s Introduction ‘suggests that by 1831 dreams had become an accepted, even a conventionally preferred mode of literary inspiration’ (10).

with Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner* is not merely convenient, as both writers were heavily influenced not only by Romantic writers, philosophy and science in general, but by Coleridge in particular, with whom they each shared their own formative relationships, and whose pervasive influence is starkly evident in their works. While Shelley's journals show her 'to have been influenced by...her reading of Coleridge and Wordsworth and the Gothic novelists' (Moers 219), her fascination with Coleridge and his supernatural poetry began early in her life when, in August 1806, as an eight-year-old girl, she witnessed Coleridge recite his Mariner's tale during a visit with her father, Godwin. During her childhood, Shelley 'was present at many of Coleridge's visits, listening to and engaging in the theological debates and philosophical discussions between these profound thinkers' (Hogsette 537), but it was Coleridge's *Mariner* which lodged in the young Mary's imagination. Baldick summarises the homage to Coleridge's poem in *Frankenstein* neatly:

Coleridge's hypnotic tale of guilt and isolation is clearly a significant source for the ice-bound voyage of *Frankenstein's* frame narrative, and possibly for its doomed and transgressing hero too. Mary Shelley was careful to emphasize the connection herself, by having Frankenstein quote (anachronistically) the "Rime" to express his fear of the monster. In her revisions of 1831 she reinforced the allusions to the poem by both Victor and Walton, making the latter attribute his enthusiasm for polar exploration to Coleridge's inspiration. It seems that in the confessional mode of the "Rime", especially in its contrast between the Mariner and the Wedding-Guest, Mary Shelley found some hints towards a narrative structure which could frame and partly domesticate the trials of the Romantic outcast. (39)

The fact that *Frankenstein* was begun during the same trip upon which Shelley and her travelling companions, including Percy and Byron, were reading from Coleridge's unpublished companion piece to *The Ancient Mariner*, *Christabel*, reinforces the idea that Coleridge bore significant influence upon Shelley's 'development as a thinker and writer' (Hogsette 537), and that through *Frankenstein*, 'Shelley participates in a conversation with Coleridge about the pleasures and the dangers of tales of the unknown' (Levy 693-4).²⁶

De Quincey's experiences with Coleridge were scarcely less formative:

De Quincey's knowledge of Coleridge as 'a man of most original genius began about the year 1799' when he first read 'The Ancient Mariner', an experience he later characterised as 'the greatest event in the unfolding of my own mind'. In his 1803 *Diary* De Quincey pondered basing his own character on the Ancient Mariner, 'shrouded in mystery – supernatural...*awfully* sublime', and the next year he began reading 'in the same track as Coleridge, - that track in which few of any age will ever

²⁶ See also Lau's 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner and *Frankenstein*', and Goodwin's 'Domesticity and Uncanny Kitsch in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and *Frankenstein*' for varying analyses of this influence.

follow us, such as German metaphysicians, Latin schoolmen, thaumaturgic Platonists, religious Mystics.’ (Morrison 27)

After meeting in 1807, De Quincey and Coleridge became friends of sorts, and De Quincey benefited from much conversation with Coleridge, as well as from occasional familiarity with his unpublished writing, marginalia and letters. His admiration of Coleridge was profound: ‘This astonishing man,’ writes De Quincey in his essay *Coleridge and Opium-eating* (1844), ‘besides being an exquisite poet, a profound political speculator, a philosophic student of literature through all its chambers and recesses, was also a circumnavigator on the most pathless waters of scholasticism and metaphysics’ (5.182-3). ‘After weighing him as a poet, as a philosophic politician, as a scholar,’ he continues, one ‘will have to wheel after him into another orbit – into the unfathomable *nimbus* of transcendental metaphysics!’ (5.182). This admiration was not limited to De Quincey’s writing about Coleridge, but is, like Shelley’s, deeply evident in his writing and in the very creation of his literary persona. ‘When “Confessions” appeared in September and October, De Quincey created himself in the role of the “English opium-eater”, a persona Coleridge developed earlier in works like the *Christabel* volume and *Biographia*’ (Morrison 37). So close was the emulation that many people initially attributed *Confessions* to Coleridge (an 1825 review in the *United States Literary Gazette* ‘hopes that Coleridge did not write the book, but speculates why he might have’ [Dendurent 4]), and critics since have often described De Quincey ‘as the double of’ Coleridge (Morrison 27).²⁷

Their position as formative prose writers working across the transition from the Romantic to the Victorian periods, as well as their close relationships with, and direct literary and philosophical influence by, Coleridge, cast Shelley and De Quincey as crucial writers in the evolution of both the modern fantasy genre and the developing philosophies of hyperspace. By taking their deep understandings of Coleridge’s Romantic concerns into prose form, these writers not only translate and disseminate, but also greatly expand upon the reach and implications of Coleridge’s ideas concerning the relationships between dreams, the Vast and the supernatural. In so doing, they participate in a liminal Romantic-Victorian exchange of contemporary ideas on dreams, psychology, space and the supernatural that would have crucial impact on the later writers working within the developing forms of Victorian fantasy.

²⁷ ‘In “Confessions”, De Quincey presents himself as Coleridge’s twin, a scholar and an experienced opium-eater crippled by indolence and dogged by nightmare: the “Confessions” closes with “The Pains of Opium” in the same way that Coleridge’s *Christabel* volume closes with “The Pains of Sleep”’ (Morrison 28). See Morrison for an analysis of the many ways that the lives of De Quincey and Coleridge overlapped and mirrored each other.

Moreover, both Shelley and De Quincey form an important piece of the fantasy trajectory because they were deeply influential writers in their own right, and their works influenced many of the later writers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, particularly those working within the developing fantasy tradition. While ‘in recent assessments De Quincey has been discussed as a quintessential Romantic, a writer who marks the transition from Romanticism to Victorianism, and a key precursor of Modernism’ (Morrison 37), at the time of his writing, De Quincey was ‘popularly known as an opium-eater and as a writer of highly imaginative if not fantastic prose,’²⁸ who, in his later years, became ‘one of the most famous literary men of his time’ (Craig and Thomas 162). In 1854 the *Westminster Review* wrote that De Quincey’s writings were ‘filled with passages of a power and beauty which have never been surpassed by any other prose writer of the age’, while ‘the *Eclectic Review* noted that...De Quincey’s *Works* would “constitute the most valuable and most enduring collection of papers, which had originally appeared in a periodical form, to be found in the entire world of literature”’ (Morrison 37). In addition to this praise, De Quincey’s writing also exerted considerable influence upon later Victorian novelists, as indicated by Thackeray’s pronouncement that ‘nothing would have pleased him more than to have met a man whose writings he so much admired’ (Findlay 60), and Dickens’s remark, while at work on the *Mystery of Edwin Drood* in 1869, ‘that among all the books which he admired those of Thomas De Quincey belonged to his “especial favourites”’ (Herbert 247).²⁹

Perhaps requiring less justification than De Quincey’s, Shelley’s claim to literary and cultural influence is better known. While Baldick suggests that ‘The twentieth-century mythologizing of *Frankenstein*, especially following its famous cinematic adaptation in 1931, has led to a narrowing of its many possible interpretations and meanings’ (5), Hunter points out that ‘Contemporary criticism is almost unanimous now in regarding *Frankenstein* as not only canonical, after years of academic neglect, but paradigm-breaking and exemplary: it is required reading for anyone who wants to understand the nineteenth century or the making of the modern consciousness’ (xi). It is in this vein that Hogsette calls *Frankenstein* ‘one of the most influential and lasting novels of the nineteenth century’ (543) and St Clair argues that ‘In Victorian times, even when *Frankenstein* was not in print and when there was no play on

²⁸ In 1845 George Gilfillian described De Quincey as ‘an extraordinary man with a powerful but imbalanced mind’, while ‘the descriptions in *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* made it very popular’ (Dendurent 4).

²⁹ As Herbert notes, ‘this statement is noteworthy in connection with *Drood* itself, an opium tale in which’ De Quincey’s ‘influence...is pervasive; indeed the novel’s opening paragraph, with its phantasmagoric vision of exotic Oriental pageantry, amounts to something very like a dedication to De Quincey, so closely is it modelled on his most distinctive stylistic effects. But Dickens’ literary connection with De Quincey is not limited to this one book; it extends, in fact, almost throughout his career’ (247). See Chapter Six.

the stage, the story was alive in the nation's memory. All through the nineteenth century we find references and allusions in literature, journalism, and politics' (54). It is this pervasive influence of the novel upon the nineteenth century, as well as its direct and extended engagement with Romantic concerns of dreams, space and the supernatural, in the form of modern prose, which makes it one of the most fundamental achievements in the evolution of the modern fantasy genre.

DREAMS, THE VAST & THE SUPERNATURAL IN DE QUINCEY

De Quincey is best known, and has received the most amount of critical attention for, his Gothic and phantasmagoric explorations of his opium-induced dreams in *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*. Importantly, the particularly architectural character of this work has often been noted, as well as the ways in which it engages with Gothic and claustrophobic spaces, morphing the dark streets of London into a phantasmagoric and Piranesian dreamscape, haunted, kaleidoscopic and destabilising.³⁰ Yet while *Confessions* has received varying analyses, it is in combination with De Quincey's wider literary corpus, including his translations of Kant and Jean Paul Richter (1824), his essays on 'Modern Superstition' (1840) and 'System of the Heavens' (1846), and his sequel to *Confessions*, *Suspiria de Profundis* (1845), that De Quincey's writing reveals a deep and at times uneasy fascination with the Coleridgean concept of the Vast and its associated sense of sublimity and infinity in both the huge and unknowable spaces of the universe, and the related supernatural realm.³¹ In keeping with the rising interest in phantasmagoria, mesmerism and spiritualism in Britain, De Quincey also perceives the Vast in the infinite reaches of the human mind, which, like the mesmeric theories of which he was aware, overlap and parallel the Vast outer space of the universe in a model of mind and space that clearly prefigures later theories of higher-dimensional space. Foremost in this theory was the liberating power of dreams as the language of the subconscious, which in their phantasmagoric and liminal character straddled the boundaries between conscious earthly life and the vast regions of outer space and the supernatural realm.

³⁰ De Quincey's Gothicising of London would also influence Dickens's similarly Gothic and dreamlike cityscapes, particularly in such novels as *Oliver Twist*, *David Copperfield* and *Dombey and Son*, and would also heavily influence American Gothic writers such as Poe.

³¹ All references to De Quincey's works are from *The Collected Writings of Thomas De Quincey*, ed. David Masson, 14 vols. (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1889-90), hereafter cited in the text by volume and page number.

De Quincey's attitudes toward the supernatural, as far as they are expressed in his literature, follow both Gothic and Coleridgean tradition in linking the supernatural with the Vast and sublime spaces of deserts and vast oceans, or the far-flung galaxies of outer space. While 'there is nothing to suggest that he actually believed in ghosts' (Crawford 225), there is more than enough evidence to suggest that he was engaging explicitly with a literary and cultural tradition that did. Ghostly, haunted in their endless repetition (where, according to Crawford, memory becomes a form of haunting), and with heavy overtones of the Gothic, De Quincey's *Confessions* and *Suspiria* reveal a direct engagement with the notion of supernatural beings. 'In his old age, he even came, like the young Marx three years later, to the conclusion that the era itself was ghost-ridden. "In this year 1845," he wrote, "the brain is haunted as if by some jealousy of ghostly beings moving amongst us"' (Crawford 226). For De Quincey, superstition, as 'sympathy with the invisible, is the greatest test of man's grandeur, as an earthly combining with a celestial. In superstition lies the possibility of religion' (8.404), and while De Quincey may have remained undecided on the reality of ghosts, his belief in a 'shadowy world beyond the grave' was both acknowledged and heavily explored in his work (2.114).

The pathway to this spiritual revelation and access to this 'shadowy world' lay, for De Quincey, in the awe occasioned by the sublime Vast, which, on the earthly plane, was best experienced via immersion within landscapes that, interestingly, closely recall those traversed by Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*. In his essay 'Modern Superstition', De Quincey proposes that 'In this world there are two mighty forms of perfect solitude – the ocean and the desert' (8.437): 'No excess of nautical skill will ever perfectly disenchant the great abyss from its terrors' (8.418), 'which will for ever impress the feeling of beings more than human' (8.437). Both the ocean and the desert 'are the parents of inevitable superstitions – of terrors, solemn, ineradicable, eternal. Sailors and the children of the desert are alike overrun with spiritual hauntings', which arise, importantly, 'from the eternal spectacle of the infinite' (8.437). This association of the supernatural with vast infinity, with the notion of the limitless or 'beyond' the limit, and specifically with the kinds of vast spaces traversed by Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner* may also have been reinforced by the strange supernatural experiences of De Quincey's brother, Pink, who, after a curiously Coleridgean voyage beyond the limit of the equator, warned De Quincey that 'ghosts might be questionable realities in our hemisphere, but "it's a different thing to the *suthard* of the line"' (1.303). As if to emphasise Coleridge's influence in his conceptions of supernatural vast space, De Quincey accompanies this

recollection with another discussion of the superstitions encouraged by the 'vast solitude of the sea', which he describes with direct reference to Coleridge's 'Kubla Khan' (1.302).

For De Quincey, however, advances in astronomy towards the mid-nineteenth century meant that the Vast was best encountered in the remote, infinite and expansive regions of outer space, and it is in the imaginative exploration of towering nebulae and infinite galaxies, which, in their access via dreams, paradoxically equal the infinite spaces of the mind, that De Quincey's apparent fascination with space finds its fullest expression. 'Great is the mystery of Space,' he writes in his 'System of the Heavens':

greater is the mystery of Time. Either mystery grows upon man, as man himself grows; and either seems to be a function of the godlike which is in man. In reality, the depths and the heights which are in man...are but projected and made objective externally in the three dimensions of space which are outside of him. He trembles at the abyss into which his bodily eyes look down, or look up; not knowing that abyss to be...the mirror to a mightier abyss that will one day be expanded in himself. (8.15)

In this way, the understanding of space is specifically linked with the imaginative powers of the mind, and the same supernatural force that governs the dizzy 'labyrinths of worlds' (8.28) in 'the enormity of their remotion' (8.21), appears within the infinite regions of the human mind to facilitate this spatial awareness, though the full comprehension of this godlike, numinous Vast is limited by this very humanity and its inability to fully move beyond 'the three dimensions of space' in which it exists, into the 'dreadful distances before which...the mind of man shudders and recoils' (8.17-8).

Indeed, while this profound awareness of space is an aspect 'of the godlike' in man, to whom is 'reserved the prerogative of perceiving space in its higher extensions, as of geometrically constructing the relations of space' (8.16), it is an awareness that is simultaneously accompanied by the awe and reverence occasioned by the sublime, attributed in large part to the sense of a 'secret power that wields these awful orbs' (8.22). De Quincey's 'System of the Heavens' argues that Lord Rosse is 'the philosopher who has most pushed back the frontiers of our conquests' into 'the illimitable growths of space' (8.16), opening up a 'new era for the human intellect' with the 'space-penetrating power' of his 'almost awful telescope' (8.14). While this telescope 'destroyed the supposed matter of stars', 'in return' it 'created immeasurable worlds' (8.23) to reveal 'what is sublime' (8.17). Importantly, this sublimity of outer space is linked specifically with both alternative states of mind and the supernatural, beheld as it is with 'the breathlessness which belongs to a saintly trance' and to 'the eternities

of death' (8.17). Indeed, 'sitting enthroned upon the shores of infinity,' the telescope 'says to the gates of darkness, "Roll back, ye barriers, and no longer hide from us the infinities of God!"' (8.16-7): a statement that seems to echo both Kantian and Swedenborgian ideas concerning the relationship between the vast spaces of the universe, and the spaces of the supernatural world.³²

While Kant's theories have been explored above, Swedenborg's ideas were made familiar to De Quincey in his translation of Kant's discussion of Swedenborgianism, in which he expressed the key idea that 'the enormous distance of the rational inhabitants of the world is to be accounted as nothing in relation to the spiritual universe; and to talk with an inhabitant of Saturn is just as easy to him as to speak with a departed human soul' (14.65). While De Quincey seems to have shared Kant's perspective on Swedenborg in general, referring to him as 'a madman' in *Tait's Magazine* in 1837 (II 118), the resonance of certain aspects of Swedenborg's general spiritual theory with De Quincey's own Christian, Romantic and poetic conceptions of the spiritual universe is too great to be ignored. De Quincey's problem with Swedenborg seems not to be his spiritualism, but his lack of sublime awe that De Quincey's feels necessary in a contemplation of the Vast and spiritual world: 'of all writers,' he suggests in his *Literary and Lake Reminiscences*, 'Swedenborg is the only one I ever heard of who has contrived to strip even the shadowy world beyond the grave of all its mystery and all its awe. From the very heaven of heavens he has rent away the veil' and has carried 'an atmosphere so earthy, and steaming with the vapours of earth, into regions which' should provoke awe and terror in alignment with the sublime, rather than familiarity and scientific 'matter-of-factness' (2.114). It was a criticism De Quincey also applied to Kant, who he deemed 'defective in his understanding of the sublime...(what Kant misses is that the sublime projects transcendence through imaginative transformations, a key to trading in impasse)' (cited in Fay 300).

De Quincey applies such imaginative exploration of higher space in his 'imaginative transformation' of the nebula in Orion to Gothic 'phantom' of 'ghostly ugliness', 'famous for its frightful magnitude, and for the frightful depths to which it is sunk in the abysses of the heavenly wilderness' (8.17-8), and so vast that between its temples 'is a horrid chasm, a ravine, a shaft, that many centuries would not traverse' (8.20-1). Significantly, both anthropomorphised and supernaturalised by this Gothic characterisation, this Vast 'phantom' (and the terror it induces) is specifically linked with dreams, as the phantom becomes 'a

³² Similarly, De Quincey describes the progressive 'uncovering' of outer space 'by astronomy' as 'like the reversing of some heavenly doom, like the raising one after another of the seals that had been sealed by the angel in the Revelation' (8.21).

vision “to dream of, not to tell”: he is ready for the worship of those that are tormented in sleep’ (8.21). The phrase ‘to dream of, not to tell’, which is, significantly, taken from Coleridge’s *Christabel* (247), finds repeated use in De Quincey’s writing, and its use here is suggestive of De Quincey’s attitudes toward the link between the supernatural, the Vast, and dreams in several ways.

Firstly, it suggests that the sublime, most particularly in the vast and ghostly regions of outer space, is best accessed via the dream, the unique liminal spatial construction of which enables the bending of time and space to allow vast distances to be crossed and sublime truths encountered. In *Suspiria*, De Quincey connects dreams with the infinite in a unique spatial and paradoxical model that foreshadows later ideas of higher-dimensional space:

The machinery for dreaming...in alliance with the mystery of darkness, is the one great tube through which man *communicates with the shadowy*. And the dreaming organ, in connexion with the heart, the eye, and the ear, composes the magnificent apparatus which *forces the infinite into the chambers of a human brain*, and throws reflections from eternities below all life upon...the sleeping mind. (my emphasis, 13.335)³³

The paradoxical enclosure of the infinite within the finite regions of the human brain is an important idea in the context of both contemporary brain-based theories of mind, and the early philosophical imagining of higher-dimensional space. Its connections with the similar hyperspace of the supernatural – ‘the shadowy’ – represents the continuation of Coleridge’s more supernatural conception of mind and its connection with the vast spaces of the universe: an idea which was bolstered via recourse to early-nineteenth-century assumptions about animal magnetism in which, following the arguments of Friedrich Schelling and Gotthelf Heinrich Schubert, human consciousness, particularly in a dreaming state, ‘responds to the vast physical energies of the solar system’ (Berwick 19).³⁴ Likewise:

Turn a screw, tighten a lynch-pin – which is not to disease, but perhaps to exalt, the mighty *machinery* of the *brain* – and the *Infinities* appear, before which the tranquility of man unsettles, the gracious forms of life depart, and the *ghostly* enters. (my emphasis, 13.25)

The language De Quincey here employs is most particularly illustrative of the ways in which writers of the early nineteenth century merged medical and mechanical models of mind and

³³ Burwick points out the important similarities between De Quincey’s ideas here and those of Jean Paul, whose work De Quincey greatly admired and translated from the German. See below.

³⁴ Likewise, De Quincey suggested that ‘It is in the faculty of mental vision...the increased power of dealing with the shadowy and the dark, that the characteristic virtue of opium lies’ (5.211).

brain function with the paradoxical idea of infinite space and the supernatural. The ‘machinery of the brain’, described as a ‘*camera obscura*’ (13.335), is a space that paradoxically reaches beyond itself (‘amplified to an extent of unutterable and self-repeating infinity’ [3.435]), and at the same time, is penetrated by the infinite and ‘the ghostly’, and thus becomes a phantasmagoric layering of texts superimposed upon each other: De Quincey’s ‘palimpsest of the brain’ (13.347).

In a related way, the phrase ‘to dream of, not to tell’ also conveys the idea that the Vast is, as De Quincey would elsewhere write, ‘incommunicable’ (3.435) – a sublime and supernatural force that evades the attempt to ‘tell’ it in language that ultimately fails to grasp the magnitude of the Vast. Dreams, however, represent a poetic and imagistic language through which the Incommunicable can be experienced symbolically. For De Quincey, ‘the imagery of my dreams translated everything into their own language’ (13.337). His ‘transcendent dreams in which he travels through space and time’ allow De Quincey ‘to understand the archetypal nature of “feelings deeper than I can analyse”’ (Fay 305). According to Crawford, ‘De Quincey was painfully aware that some of his experiences, waking or dreaming, were beyond his power to reduce to words’ (234).

However, this awareness of the incommunicability of the Vast did not stop De Quincey from aiming, through his ‘impassioned prose’ and his layered dream texts, to come as close as he could to verbally expressing the sublime and supernatural mysteries he perceived in the universe. His dream writings are in part an attempt to ‘tell’ this incommunicable – to understand and order this space – but the very nature of the incommunicable means that he is always doomed to fail. His dream writings take on a kaleidoscopic, shifting, unstable character through a narrative that moves within and through itself, and the abyss appears in the gaps between both the words and the dream ‘sketches’. Indeed, his work is characterized as much by absence and ellipsis as repetition and haunting, and he is foiled by his own hand as his leaping, layered, fragmented, reflecting and repeated technique of capturing his dreams in writing indicate and impose the complex and illimitable infinitude of the Vast that he is trying to pin down.³⁵ This multilayered, fluid and hyperspatial construct of dreams is returned to as:

³⁵ Significantly, even De Quincey’s ‘great attempt to finish unfinished stories was, itself, left unfinished’ as De Quincey never realized his plan of including ‘a series of “twenty or twenty-five” dream stories at the end of the *Confessions*’ (Crawford 231). Crawford describes De Quincey’s dream writings as ‘an attempt to reclaim his waking life’ and cease the ‘hauntings’ that dominate his dreams (231). See also Berwick 20-22.

Dream forms itself mysteriously within dream; within those Oxford dreams remodels itself continually the trance in my sister's chamber – the blue heavens, the everlasting vault, the soaring billows, the throne steeped in the thought (but not the sight) of 'Who might sit thereon;' the flight, the pursuit, the irrecoverable steps of my return to earth. (1.50)

In this attempt – and failure – to define the infinite in language, De Quincey's work displays 'a larger affinity for...preverbal states...which dispose him toward what the rational mind contests but the dreaming mind yearns for' (Fay 293). Characterised by shifting spaces, multiple layers of dream within dream, and by blindness and Incommunicability in the face of the ultimate supernatural, these dream voyages echo those similarly liminal and supernatural experiences in *Confessions*, where De Quincey's dreams follow a related series of liminal thresholds, initiated by the Oriental 'other' – the Malay – that first appears at the 'threshold' of De Quincey's door, and that are 'connected as ruminations on that ultimate threshold, death' (Fay 309). In dreams, the Self becomes subliminal – a Subliminal Self – that travels in these liminal Vast spaces – the borderlands of mind and hyperspace.³⁶ Importantly, in so doing, it prefigures the Subliminal Selves that would later cross the threshold into the supernatural Vast via the agency of dreams in the later fantasy novels of Carroll, Kingsley and MacDonald. 'De Quincey's positioning of the literary against silence or illegibility reenacts the way in which knowledge gives way to fantasy, alienation and quest in the dreams' (Fay 298), and clearly posits dream space as a liminal space between the conscious and the subconscious minds, the inner and the outer, the natural and the supernatural: a space within which the Incommunicable Vast is translated and intuited, and which paves the way for the later use of dreams as a literal portal into the supernatural world in the fantasy novels of the late nineteenth century.

While *Confessions* and *Suspiria* represent De Quincey's journeys through the vast and Gothic regions of dream space, it is within his translations of another great dream writer, Jean Paul Richter (who would also heavily influence George MacDonald and his later dream fantasies), that the relationship that these texts suggest between the vast regions of space and the supernatural realm find their fullest expression. De Quincey closes his 'System of the Heavens' by quoting a passage from Richter, which he has translated and revised from the original German, and entitled 'Dream-vision of the Infinite as it reveals itself in the Chambers of Space'. The passage deals chiefly with intermingled notions of outer space, dream space,

³⁶ This language – the Subliminal Self – is chosen specifically to highlight the connection with the work of Frederick Myers and the way it was picked up in the later nineteenth century to aid the mapping of the 'Borderland' – that region of physical space connected with the supernatural and visible to human perception only via liminal states of mind such as dreams and mesmeric trance.

and supernatural space, and the idea of the Self liminally traversing these spaces – and accessing Vast truths – via dream or trance state. ‘Called up from dreams’ and ‘transformed into a spiritual body’, the self embarks on an ‘infinite voyage...into endless space...through wilderness of death, that divided the worlds of life...over frontiers that were quickening under prophetic motions towards a life not yet realised,’ and through spaces that seem ‘ghostly from infinitude’ (8.33-4). This space, infinite and supernatural, takes on an extension that seems to layer space within space and disorient the traditional ways of perceiving spatial dimensionality:

above was below, below was above...depth was swallowed up by height insurmountable, height was swallowed up in depth unfathomable. Suddenly as thus they rode from infinite to infinite, suddenly as thus they tilted over abysmal worlds, a mighty cry arose – that systems more mysterious, worlds more billowy – other heights, and other depths – were dawning, were nearing, were at hand. (8.34)³⁷

Most significantly, other translations of Richter reveal that within these ‘immeasurable spaces’ there is ‘as much a home for the abode of a spiritual world, as there is a dwelling-place for thy own spirit in the substance of the brain’ (11.290): within ‘those unseen depths of the Universe’ lies ‘the unseen world of spirits’ (11.293), and it is within dreams – ‘the ante-chamber of the grave’ – that access to ‘the other world’ is afforded (11.288). Though De Quincey had surpassed Coleridge’s limit and imaginatively penetrated the Vast and supernatural more than any other British writer, in his worldview it is through the symbolic and phantasmagoric space of dreams that Vast space can be accessed. The Vast remains, once again, a sublime and incommunicable force ‘to dream of, not to tell’.

ANIMATING SPIRITS: SCIENCE, SOMNIAL SPACE & THE SUPERNATURAL IN SHELLEY’S *FRANKENSTEIN*

Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* has been read in many different ways,³⁸ but the majority of these readings, especially in the wake of the novel’s 1931 filmic adaptation, assume that the

³⁷ See Byrns’s ‘De Quincey’s Revisions in the “Dream-Fugue”’ on the differences between Richter’s original text and De Quincey’s translated version. On other similarities, see Black’s ‘Levana: Levitation in Jean Paul and Thomas de Quincey.’

³⁸ Moers suggests that the novel has been read ‘as an existential fable; as a commentary on the split between reason and feeling, in both philosophical thought and educational theory; as a parable of the excesses of idealism and genius; as a dramatization of the divided self; as an attack on the stultifying force of social convention’ (223). See also Comitini’s ‘The Limits of Discourse and the Ideology of Form in Mary Shelley’s

central framework of the story, around which the novel's various other meanings are arranged, is a secular exploration of scientific and technological achievement that sets the novel apart from its Gothic predecessors, and allows it to claim its well-known title as one of the earliest examples of science fiction. For example, Baldick's argument that the 'novelty of *Frankenstein* which sets it apart from the phantasmagoria of Faust and of the Gothic novel is...its starkly secular nature' (42), echoes Levine's suggestion that 'one of the most interesting aspects of *Frankenstein* is that, for the most part, it eschews the supernatural. Mary's originating idea for the story was developed from what was taken to be fact' (17). Yet while these critics insist upon a story acted out 'in the absence of God' (Baldick 42), they make no mention of the many and clear mentions of, and allusions to, the supernatural within all levels of the novel, from its central and framing narratives, which closely investigate the relationship between the natural and supernatural worlds, and explore the mediation between these spaces via dreams, madness and altered states of consciousness, to Shelley's famous initial impetus to produce a 'ghost story' (Shelley 262). Indeed, much more than being a novel about the secular achievements of science and technology, *Frankenstein* is a novel about the supernatural and, in particular, the processes and consequences of human engagement with specifically Coleridgean notions of the Vast.³⁹

This resituating of *Frankenstein* within its original highly supernatural context applies to the very science that is often used to justify the novel's classification as science fiction. Indeed, modern critical analyses that view *Frankenstein*'s science as a purely secular phenomenon partake in a twentieth-century anachronistic revision that overlooks just how 'supernatural' much of the science during the Romantic era was. Bound up in the still prevailing Gothic aesthetic, science in the early nineteenth century was both highly speculative, and often specifically geared toward illuminating the supernatural or occult world. As Fara explains, 'the label "science fiction", with its oxymoronic contrast between two supposed opposites, depends on the separation of sciences and the arts that had not been completed in Shelley's time' (29). Instead, 'There were no firm boundaries separating natural philosophy from theology, fiction and exploration' (28). Likewise, Hindle emphasises 'how thrillingly

"Frankenstein" for a summary of the various feminist readings of the novel in terms of domesticity and its relationship to the social, ethical and scientific domains of both the novel and early-nineteenth-century culture.

³⁹ It is important to note that such a reading that treats what may initially appear as minor supernatural elements within the text, especially given the critical penchant for interpreting the novel in scientific rather than supernatural terms, does not reduce or disqualify, but rather enriches and enhances, the many other ways of reading the text. In the wake of the relatively recent elevation of the novel to critical and academic acclaim, and the dominance of technological interpretations, such a reading resituates *Frankenstein* in its important position as a pivotal transmitter of Coleridgean ideas of the relationship between dreaming space, supernatural space and human perception from poetry into the prose novel form, and the important place this holds in the development of both the fantasy genre and the serious cultural investigation into the supernatural as a whole.

speculative and open the state of science was at the historical moment in which Mary Shelley was writing' (30), while Kirkby importantly points out that 'The creation of *Frankenstein* is embedded in a cultural matrix that included the spiritual sciences and their accompanying fascination with animal magnetism, somnambulism, clairvoyance, spirit apparitions, foreknowledge, trances, mediums, thought transfer, second sight, posthumous survival and thought transference between the living and the dead' (100). Kirkby's application of the phrase 'spiritual sciences' is key in illustrating the air of scientific plausibility that many supernatural and occult theories had during the time in which Shelley was writing. Further, as well as offering context for the Romantic era's speculative scientific debates, which blended science and supernaturalism in their investigation of invisible phenomena, this notion of spiritual science helps to explain the close relationship between science and the supernatural that exists specifically in *Frankenstein*, and thus reconceptualise its traditional generic placement as science fiction in a context of predominately supernatural, rather than secular, science.

Indeed, rather than an example of purely secular science, the central scientific premise of the novel – the supposedly electrical animation of a corpse with a 'spark of being' (Shelley 318) – can be seen as a specifically supernatural idea, in which electricity acts as the means through which to inject a supernatural spirit into a material body. Importantly, while the electrical animation of body parts had been suggested by Galvanism, and Shelley acknowledges this source in her 1831 Introduction, contrary to Levine's opinion, it was by no means considered as accepted fact. Rather, it was bound up in a context of widely publicised and highly speculative contemporary debates over the nature of life and its processes – subjects that had once been the preserve of theological speculation. The most significant of these debates that pitched the steadily advancing reaches of science into the mysteries of the supernatural, and the debate 'which formed an important source for *Frankenstein*' (Jackson 'Science' 154), was the 1814 debate between the vitalist John Abernethy and the materialist William Lawrence over whether or not a 'life force' existed.⁴⁰ For Butler, 'Mary Shelley's contribution to the ghost-story competition to some degree acts out the debate between Abernethy and Lawrence, in a form close enough for those who knew it to recognise' (307). The significance of Abernethy's vitalism in the context of *Frankenstein*'s cosmology is that it posits electricity as the closest analogy to the supernatural idea of a soul or spirit. As Mishra explains:

⁴⁰ See Miller's 'The Being and Becoming of *Frankenstein*' for an insightful account of the competing scientific philosophies behind Frankenstein's approach to creating his monster.

The significance of Abernethy's lecture lay in his vitalist assumption that life was a self-contained, immutable and transcendental principle not identified with the body. Life, in this highly mystical view, was like the soul or *atman*, independent of the mechanical body. Life is therefore "superadded to structure" and, on the same basis, the mind, too, is "superadded to life." The closest analogy to life was electricity. (Mishra 189)

Significantly, Mishra argues that this connection 'becomes more significant through the mediation of Coleridge...for whom the organised body was "nothing but the consequence of life, nothing but the means by which and through which it displays itself"' (189-90). This separation of the body and the soul, and the idea that electricity was, as leading eighteenth-century electrical performer Adam Walker put it, 'the soul of the material world' (cited in Jackson 'Science' 154), is particularly important in reconceptualising *Frankenstein's* science, and thus its generic classification as 'science fiction', as it suggests that when Frankenstein 'infuse(s) a spark of being into the lifeless thing' (318), he is not working with merely material forces to energise a corpse, but is instead harnessing the power of the spiritual world to 'superadd' a soul or spirit to the lifeless body.

Furthermore, the description of Frankenstein 'infusing' (318) the corpse with electricity, which expresses the early-nineteenth-century idea that electricity was a fluid, carries further connotations of the supernatural by linking this process with mesmerism, which was often thought to be facilitated by a 'mesmeric fluid' that connected human to celestial bodies, and, by extension, the spiritual world. In effect, Frankenstein utilises the connection that electrical 'fluid' provides between the natural and supernatural worlds to harness a spirit from the supernatural realm, which he 'infuses' within the creature, and thus sets 'loose' upon the earth (339). In this way, Frankenstein's 'science' is much closer to 'the raising of ghosts or devils' that he 'eagerly sought' through his early studies (299) than critics have generally allowed.⁴¹ In this historically specific view, Frankenstein's 'unearthly occupation' (420) takes on a distinctly supernatural character that is much more in tune with the spirit of early-nineteenth-century speculative science than modern material conceptions of electricity. It is this vastly more supernatural basis to the novel's 'science' that allows critics such as Ketterer to challenge the novel's traditional classification as 'science fiction' and posit instead a more historically specific view of Shelley's 'original more purely gothic and supernatural conception' (78).⁴²

⁴¹ Ketterer points out that 'according to the extant manuscript evidence,' Shelley 'first used (alongside chemistry)' the term 'natural magic' 'to characterise Frankenstein's early studies' (70).

⁴² Shelley's description of literary creation may also offer insight into the supernatural nature of the monster's creation. In her 1831 Introduction Shelley wrote, 'Invention, it must be humbly admitted, does not consist in

Indeed, while *Frankenstein's* monster has been imagined with an iconic and distinctly corporeal presence since its modern filmic adaptations, the original text is emphatically vague in its physical descriptions of the monster, and through a combination of Gothic terminology and shifting physical descriptions that are characterised by indeterminacy and ambiguity, supports much more the idea of this 'being' as an embodied spirit that remains closely linked with the ethereal supernatural world from which it was brought.⁴³ Rather than merely animated flesh, the monster is characterised, in shifting and unstable terms, in the language of the Gothic aesthetic. Various referred as a 'being', an 'apparition' (279), a 'spectre' and as 'my own spirit let loose from the grave' (339), this ghostly being is also frequently called a 'daemon', a term which, according to Ketterer, 'links the monster with the benevolent spirits of natural magic' (68). The number of varied terms applied to the monster, as well as the level of uncertainty attached to many of these supernatural terms as scientific descriptors, signify an unnameable force – a distinctly supernatural being that exists beyond natural and scientific classification.⁴⁴ Such descriptions of the monster, which emphasise ethereality and indistinctness, are important in the context of *Frankenstein's* cultural heritage and critical reception because they cast the creature less as corporeal monster and more as Gothic ghost. Indeed, Varma's suggestion that Shelley's monster is a typical Gothic character in that it shares the 'other-worldliness' and the 'unreality and eeriness of ghosts' (212) is supported by the fact that the monster seems to become less and less corporeal as the narrative progresses. The monster evades sight and description, and is rarely described in concrete terms, if at all. Appearing often only as a laugh in the darkness, a whispered voice at Frankenstein's ear, a pair of yellow eyes 'by the glimmer of the half-extinguished light' (318), a shadow against the 'pale yellow light of the moon' (468), or an indiscriminate form illuminated by flashes of lightning in otherwise impenetrable darkness, this 'dreaded spectre' takes 'a form which',

creating out of void, but out of chaos; the material must, in the first place, be afforded: it can give form to dark, shapeless substances, but cannot bring into being the substance itself' (262). While a metaphor for the process of creating her 'hideous progeny' (the novel), this description may also suggest that Frankenstein's own 'hideous progeny' (the monster) was similarly created not from nothing – a materialist view – but from existing 'shapeless substances' – vital 'life force' or soul – from the chaos of the Vast, unknown, supernatural world.

⁴³ The twentieth-century mythologizing of *Frankenstein*, especially following its famous cinematic adaptation in 1931, has led to a narrowing of its many possible interpretations and meanings, and a central problem within this narrowing, as Baldick explains, 'has to do with the difference between visible and invisible monsters' (5).

⁴⁴ Shelley's novel is concerned directly with the attempt to define and realize something via the process of naming it, and with the difficulties inherent in objects that elide or negate this process of naming and definition (see Mellor 134). Indeed, Shelley herself acknowledged the importance of the creature's unnameability when she approved of the method of listing the character of the monster in the playbill for the novel's first dramatic production in 1826 as '***** [played by] Mr. O. Smith,' stating that 'this nameless mode of naming the unnameable is rather good' (cited in Mellor 133-4). Speaking of the fantasy genre in general, Matthews argues that 'A deep concern for language and the act of naming is nearly universal in fantasy' (14), and this is one of the many ways in which Shelley's novel captures (and helps to form) the impulse of fantasy literature in the nineteenth century: to find a way to name, to explore in language and corporeal terms, the unknowable, unnameable space of the supernatural, and the creatures that hail from its unknown regions. See also Kincaid's "'Words Cannot Express": *Frankenstein's* Tripping on the Tongue.'

significantly, those who view it ‘cannot find words to describe’ (492). Blurred, unnameable, indescribable, and hence undefinable, the creature is a truly sublime being that exists beyond the limit of language and comprehension itself, and thus evades moral, scientific and even spiritual classification.

By tapping into the prevailing Gothic aesthetic and its relationship with Romantic theories of mind, these ghostly descriptions also cast eerily literal light on Frankenstein’s occasional phantasmagoric visions, such as when he ‘thought’ he ‘saw the dreaded spectre glide into the room’ (322-3). In the context of Romantic phantasmagoria as ambiguous psychological and supernatural phenomenon, the fact that Frankenstein *thinks* he sees the spectre here constitutes as much of a supernatural haunting as the being’s later physical appearances do. In the same vein is Frankenstein’s description of being ‘haunted’ by the consciousness of his actions, in which he feels ‘as if I had committed some great crime, the consciousness of which haunted me. I was guiltless, but I had indeed drawn down a horrible curse upon my head, as mortal as that of crime’ (431). Frankenstein’s words take on a double meaning here: ‘the consciousness of which haunted me’ can mean obviously that Frankenstein’s awareness of his transgressions ‘haunted’ him by repeating in his mind; but also, in the context of his supernatural experiment, Frankenstein is literally haunted by this spectre – by a supernaturally-evoked consciousness – that he has ‘drawn down’ from the supernatural world.

The text supports this supernatural and spatial reading further. Not only does the electrical animation of the creature render it a supernatural spirit displaced into the natural world – an embodied ghost – but the entire interaction between Frankenstein and this being then becomes one enacted within the kinds of vast and sublime spaces indicative of Coleridge’s association of the Vast with the supernatural world. In other words, in evoking a supernatural spirit, Frankenstein has not merely unnaturally injected a supernatural element into the natural world, but his actions ignite a clash between the vast spaces of the natural and supernatural realms by bringing them into dangerous proximity, and it is within this volatile liminal space between the natural and supernatural worlds that the principle action of the narrative is set. Through this thematising of liminal space, *Frankenstein* moves beyond its earlier Gothic and Romantic predecessors to more fully explore the imagined limit between the natural and supernatural worlds, as well as the potential consequences of traversing that invisible boundary.

That this dual concept of liminal space and its traversal forms a chief concern of the novel is indicated by the text's sustained metaphor of Promethean fire, and the ways that this metaphor is evoked within landscapes and contexts that recall Burkean and Coleridgean notions of the sublime and the Vast. The specific mythological reference to Prometheus is found only in the novel's subtitle, which captions Frankenstein (and thus the focus of the story) as 'The Modern Prometheus', but this metaphor also forms the major thematic and symbolic undercurrent throughout the narrative. Most critics view this subtitle as a reference to Frankenstein's transgression against the laws of nature – a Promethean overstep – as he attempts to create life without a woman, or to 'play God' by artificially imbuing a corpse with life (Hogsette 531). However, in the context of the early-nineteenth-century scientific investigation of supernatural space, this metaphor can be taken further to embrace more completely the literal sense of reaching beyond the limit into the supernatural realm that the Promethean myth entails. In this interpretation, Frankenstein's electrical experiment, through which he seeks to 'penetrate the secrets of nature' (Shelley 298), and 'pioneer a new way' by exploring 'unknown powers' (308) mirrors Prometheus's act of trespassing beyond the limit of the natural world to 'steal' a power from the supernatural realm.⁴⁵ Prometheus's fire, stolen from the Gods, becomes Frankenstein's 'spark of being' – the ghostly spirit wrested from its place in the spiritual realm – and Frankenstein's persecution following this transgression completes the parallel. In this much more spatial interpretation, Frankenstein's transgression becomes not merely a moral or intellectual one – the contemporary concern that science was trespassing into the theological domain, which was, interestingly, a criticism specifically levelled at the scientific harnessing of electricity⁴⁶ – but also a more explicitly spatial and supernatural trespassing, where Frankenstein's actions reach beyond the limit of the natural world into supernatural space, and draw down from it a supernatural being, which is then embodied and 'set loose' into the natural world. In this conception, Frankenstein's transgression is much more than attaining the secret of life: it is the specific act of causing a spirit to pass beyond the limit between the natural and supernatural worlds into a space in

⁴⁵ Goodall supports a more supernatural interpretation of the Promethean metaphor, and believes that this is one of the key concepts for critical reinterpretation ('Electrical Romanticism' 119).

⁴⁶ As Ian Jackson explains, 'the borders between the visible and invisible peculiar to electrical phenomena also positioned scientific research in the demesne of theology. There was a powerful sense that the electrical source of energy was the prerogative of God,' and 'critics responded to what they saw as the godless commercialism of electrical performers, with warnings of the moral and spiritual dangers of uninformed tinkering with the forces of nature' (152). This sense of biblical transgression is important in *Frankenstein*, and Ziolkowski points out the 'forbidden' nature of the knowledge Frankenstein seeks, which is emphasised by the many Biblical references throughout the novel (46-51). Clemens, on the other hand, relates this concept to the Gothic: 'In his disregard for the spiritual ramifications of his project, Shelley's Frankenstein epitomises the dangers attending the scientific world view. His actions and their consequences constitute the typical warning encoded in Gothic fiction, that rejection of the spiritual can lead to an eruption of the daemonic' (91).

which it does not belong. In this sense, Frankenstein's transgression is both physical and moral, as it brings about an amalgamation of the natural and supernatural worlds that draws these worlds into unstable proximity and throws them out of balance, creating a liminal space of overlap between them in which the rest of the novel is set.

Frankenstein himself acknowledges this spatial transgression of the boundary between the natural and supernatural worlds in his entreaties to Walton to abandon his pursuit of nature's invisible limits at the North Pole, and, in a most telling spatial metaphor, to 'learn' from him 'how dangerous is the acquirement of knowledge and how much happier that man is who *believes his native town to be the world*, than he who aspires to become *greater than his nature will allow*' (my emphasis 313). Interestingly, this plea concerning the limits of human nature on the verge of the supernatural world becomes even more poignant in the light of Ketterer's suggestion that Walton's quest 'to discover the secret of the magnet' (270) links his journey with mesmerism, and thus parallels Frankenstein's own foray into the frontiers of the occult world (69). Yet while these warnings support a more spatial reading of the Promethean metaphor, this sense of physically traversing the limit between the natural and supernatural worlds, as well as the notion of bringing a supernatural spirit back into the natural world, is strengthened none more so than by Shelley's direct references to Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*, the poem which serves as both Walton's inspiration for his journey to the limit (276), and is repeatedly referenced by Frankenstein upon his own liminal transgression beyond the limit of the natural world (see further below). Like the *Ancient Mariner*, Frankenstein has traversed the natural boundary into the sublime space of the Vast and must now endure with his liminal existence between these worlds, grappling with the Vast in the form of the incomprehensible, unnameable, invisible and insurmountable, represented by both the spirit that he has loosed into the world, and the sublime landscapes he encounters it within.

These themes of border crossing and the volatile liminal space between the natural and supernatural worlds are expressed by the symbolic use of the Promethean metaphor from the beginning of the novel. In this metaphor, the supernatural association of fire achieved within the Prometheus myth, is extended to various forms of fire, light, lightning, and electricity, which are also linked with supernatural energy through the categorical connection with the 'spark of being' that animates the monster. To complete the metaphor, these various forms of light are juxtaposed with darkness, and both work together to construct a double metaphor concerning the limits (and transgression) of both human knowledge and the natural world. In

this construction, darkness represents both the limit of the natural world – an enclosed space that in its darkness feels small and confined – and the limit of human knowledge that is attached to this confined natural world. Light, like the Promethean fire of the Gods, is something that exists beyond this dark space – the supernatural electricity that represents spirit and soul. Its occasional entries into the dark natural world are occasioned within tumultuous lightning storms in the heavens, or the dull light of a sublime moon filtering through the darkness that represents the limit of the natural world. Such flashes of light – of supernatural energy – represent both Frankenstein's knowledge of the occult world, and his actions in harnessing such energy to animate his creature. Indeed, that these symbols represent not only intellectual but also specifically spatial trespass is indicated by the fact they are employed within the kinds of sublime spaces that Coleridge associated with the Vast and the supernatural world, where they are often juxtaposed with one another in a dichotomy that pits the natural world and human knowledge against the Vast regions of the supernatural.

From the moment of its inspiration, Frankenstein's quest to harness the supernatural is cast in this symbolism of discovering light in the darkness. Frankenstein's initial inspiration to begin his studies of alchemy and natural magic are occasioned, significantly, by the sublime effects of a lightning storm: 'I beheld a stream of fire issue from an old and beautiful oak...and so soon as the dazzling light vanished, the oak had disappeared, and nothing remained but a blasted stump...I never beheld anything so utterly destroyed' (300). The fact that the source of this light suggests the sublime and terrible powers of nature – of the Vast – is significant. As well as representing the spark of inspiration that begins Frankenstein's quest to divine the secrets of life, this instance of light and its sublime power foreshadows Frankenstein's lack of reverence for the Vast, and the consequences of such a quest to meddle with it, as the phrases 'blasted' and 'destroyed' are echoed later in both Frankenstein's and the creature's depictions of their ambitions and even themselves. It is significant that this initial burst of light and electricity, which left the tree 'blasted', leads to that Promethean discovery that, by the end of the novel, leaves Frankenstein similarly 'blasted'.⁴⁷

Following this initial illumination, the symbols of light and juxtaposed darkness are immediately associated with liminality and the concept of traversing beyond the boundaries of the natural world, as 'Life and death appeared' to Frankenstein, 'ideal bounds, which I should first break through, and pour a torrent of light into our dark world' (314). Divorcing

⁴⁷ Brooks suggests that 'All aspirations, then, lie blasted and wasted at the end, as if the original act of overreaching, of sacrilegious creation, had tainted the world with monsterism' (603).

the light from its natural, sublime source in the mysterious powers of nature and the Vast, Frankenstein here uses the ‘torrent of light’ to represent arcane knowledge – the secrets of the supernatural world, the secret of life – and this metaphor is again employed at the moment that Frankenstein makes this breakthrough:

from the midst of this darkness a sudden light broke in upon me – a light so brilliant and wondrous, yet so simple, that while I became dizzy with the immensity of the prospect which it illustrated, I was surprised that among so many men of genius who had directed their enquiries toward the same science, that I alone should be reserved to discover so astonishing a secret. (312)

Yet for all the simplicity of this light, and Frankenstein’s excitement in bringing it into the natural world, there remains, from this point on, a persistent sense that it does not belong. At the point at which this light becomes embodied within the creature – in a seeming transfer from flame to ‘spark of being’ as Frankenstein’s candle burns down and ‘by the glimmer of the half-extinguished light...the dull yellow eye of the creature opened’ (318) – Frankenstein has traversed the natural boundary into the sublime space of the Vast and must now endure a liminal existence between these worlds, grappling with the Vast in the form of the incomprehensible, unnameable, invisible, and insurmountable, represented by both the spirit that he has loosed into the world, and the sublime landscapes he encounters it within. Indeed, most tellingly, after the terrible animation of the creature, Frankenstein’s sudden awareness of his own transgression is expressed with a direct quotation of Coleridge’s *Ancient Mariner*, a quotation that conveys not only Frankenstein’s traversal beyond the limit into the supernatural realm, but also the idea that he has brought a supernatural being back with him – a ‘frightful fiend’ that now haunts him (and indeed Frankenstein will later use this terminology to describe the being that follows him [431]):

Like one, that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round walks on,
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows, a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread. (320)

It is fitting, given Coleridge’s powerful influence on Shelley and her novel, that she should use a direct quotation from his most supernatural and spatial of poems to indicate at this point that Frankenstein’s transgression has not been a merely scientific one: like the Ancient Mariner, he has ventured beyond the limit of the natural world and returned with a supernatural being that is now ‘loosed’ within it. It is an action that destabilises the balance

between the natural and supernatural worlds, and opens up a liminal, volatile space between them – a space in which Frankenstein becomes embroiled in a struggle with this supernatural being for natural balance.

In view of this heavy Coleridgean influence, it is appropriate that Frankenstein's emergence into a liminal space between the natural and supernatural worlds is expressed through dreams (which in Coleridge's imagination occupy a similarly liminal space between the two realms), and particularly, in a shift from dream to nightmare. After the monster's creation, 'the beauty of the dream vanished' (318) and Frankenstein realises the horror of what he has done: 'dreams that had been my food and pleasant rest for so long a space were now become hell to me; and the change was so rapid, the overthrow so complete!' (320). On the night of the monster's creation – the night that Frankenstein creates a liminal space of overlap between the natural and supernatural realms – Frankenstein is suddenly beset with 'the wildest dreams', distinctly Gothic in character, and he wakes from his first nightmare under the 'dim and yellow light of the moon' only to see the terrible nightmare-in-life of the 'daemoniacal corpse' peering over him (319). From this moment onward, in contrast to the brilliant illumination of his discovery, Frankenstein's journey through the liminal space between the natural and supernatural worlds, on the borders of the awful sublime and the unlimited, incomprehensible powers of the Vast, is characterised by blindness, darkness and obscured vision, a darkness that indicates his inability to fully master the sublime and supernatural forces that he has loosed into the natural world. The fullest example of this blindness occurs toward the end of the narrative, when Frankenstein states:

The cup of life was poisoned forever, and although the sun shone upon me...I saw around me nothing but a dense and frightful darkness, penetrated by no light but the glimmer of two eyes that glared upon me...the watery, clouded eyes of the monster. (453)

Miller suggests that this 'psychological instability progressively increases and invades the novel's outer world', forcing the reader 'to recognise this world's fundamental instability' (69), yet in the context of Gothic and Romantic discourse on natural and supernatural space, Frankenstein's growing state of nightmare seems to represent the tension brought about by the liminal interaction between these spaces.

Two of the novel's most important scenes employ the Promethean metaphor to illustrate most clearly this volatile liminal space and its juxtaposition of darkness, humanity and nature with

light, electricity, vast space and the supernatural. Set in the kinds of Gothic mountainous landscapes that accord with Burkean notions of the sublime,⁴⁸ these liminal spaces, like those of Walpole and Radcliffe, represent the overlapping boundaries between the natural and supernatural worlds, and Frankenstein confirms this Gothic significance by specifically associating them with the supernatural and the presence of spirits.⁴⁹ Moreover, the very ease with which the monster traverses these volatile spaces, as well as its specific symbolic linking with light as it moves through them, emphasise still further its supernatural origin. Indeed, as Mellor suggests, the ‘appearances of the creature in the novel are simultaneous with the revelation of the sublime’ (131), and ‘the creature himself embodies the human sublime’ with his ‘gigantic stature, his physical strength...his predilection for desert mountains and dreary glaciers...and above all his origin in the traversal of the boundary between life and death’, all of which ‘render him both “obscure” and “vast,” the touchstones of the sublime’ (132). ‘Superhuman’ and thus supernatural, the monster is at home in the vast spaces of ‘desert mountains and...dreary glaciers’ at the limits of the natural world (Shelley 364), and his sublime and supernatural qualities produce “the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling,” a Gothic *frisson* of pure terror’ (Mellor 132). Brooks also supports this idea, arguing that ‘It is as if the Monster, generated within the sanctum of nature, at home in its most sublime settings, might himself represent the final secret of nature, its force of forces’ (600).⁵⁰

The first of these scenes involves Frankenstein’s discovery that the monster has murdered William as he journeys into the vast and open spaces outside the limits of his town. The flashes of Promethean light and fire that had initially signalled his forays into the supernatural realm now become indications of the sublime and uncontrollable power of the supernatural

⁴⁸ Mellor’s acknowledgement of Shelley’s close adherence to Burke’s definition of the sublime landscape, which included ‘greatness of dimension (especially as contrasted with the finite limits of the human body) which gives rise to an idea of infinity; obscurity (which blurs the definition of boundaries); profound darkness or intense light; and sudden, sharp angles’ (131), also supports the association of the Promethean juxtaposition of light and darkness throughout the novel with the sublime and Vast.

⁴⁹ This is a partnering of sublime space with the supernatural that is echoed at several points in the novel, most notably in Frankenstein’s preamble to his narrative, and in Shelley’s own Introduction. Before relaying his ‘marvellous’ tale to Walton, Frankenstein seems to address the reader’s potential scepticism by stating that ‘Were we among the tamer scenes of nature I might fear to encounter your unbelief, perhaps your ridicule; but many things will appear possible in these wild and mysterious regions which would provoke the laughter of those unacquainted with the ever-varied powers of nature’ (286). Shelley herself seems to echo this appeal to the unknown quality of the Vast in her Introduction, in which she admits, ‘It is a subject also of additional interest to the author that this story was begun in the majestic region where the scene is principally laid’ (268).

⁵⁰ See Brooks for a detailed and particularly insightful examination of the ways that language is used to impose and challenge the ‘natural order’ in the novel, as well as to establish and signify the relationship between Frankenstein and his monster. On the use of the sublime, see also Poston 29.

world that he has disturbed, juxtaposed sharply against the darkness that blinds Frankenstein's sight, and thus his knowledge and mastery of this vast space:

the darkness and storm increased every minute...vivid flashes of lightning dazzled my eyes, illuminating the lake, making it appear like a vast sheet of fire; then for an instant every thing seemed of a pitchy darkness, until the eye recovered itself from the preceding flash. (337)

Firmly out of his depth within this liminal space, teetering on the brink of the supernatural Vast, Frankenstein associates 'this noble war in the sky' with the supernatural, connecting it with the departed spirit of William, to whom he calls, 'William, dear angel! This is thy funeral, this thy dirge!' (338). It is within this liminal space that Frankenstein feels so close to the beings of the spirit world that they might audibly hear him, and, sure enough, his calls are answered by the appearance of a supernatural being, though not the one he had addressed:

As I said these words, I perceived in the gloom a figure...A flash of lightning illuminated the object and discovered its shape plainly to me; its gigantic stature, and the deformity of its aspect, more hideous than belongs to humanity, instantly informed me that it was the wretch, the filthy demon to whom I had given life. (338)

Clearly at home in this inhospitable space, the creature is firmly linked with the supernatural world through the Promethean flashes of light through which it becomes visible to Frankenstein, who is otherwise bound and limited by blindness and darkness: 'The figure passed me quickly, and I lost it in the gloom' before 'another flash discovered him to me hanging among the rocks of the nearly perpendicular ascent of Mount Salève...He soon reached the summit and disappeared', after which 'the scene was enveloped in an impenetrable darkness' (338).

This scene is echoed again later in the novel, when Frankenstein climbs into the Valley of Chamounix to escape the awful reality of the monster's murders. Looming, impenetrable, storm-struck and laced with ruined castles, these spaces are distinctly Gothic and sublime, and are specifically linked with the notion of a higher, supernatural world existing beyond the natural:

The immense mountains and precipices that overhung me on every side, the sound of the river raging among the rocks, and the dashing of the waterfalls around, spoke of a power mighty as Omnipotence – and I ceased to fear or to bend before any being less almighty than that which had created and ruled the elements, here displayed in their most terrific guise. Still, as I ascended higher, the valley assumed a more magnificent and astonishing character. Ruined castles hanging on the precipices of piny mountains...formed a scene of singular beauty. But it was augmented and rendered

sublime by the mighty Alps, whose white and shining pyramids and domes towered above all, as belonging to another earth, the habitations of another race of beings. (358)

Already within a liminal space that he associates with the supernatural realm, Frankenstein climbs still further beyond these Gothic spaces into completely inhospitable regions of 'vast mountains' (360), 'immense glaciers' (358), and a 'sea, or rather...vast river of ice' (362) that are much more reminiscent of Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*. It is within this liminal space, that Frankenstein again employs the Promethean metaphor to juxtapose the obscurity of the natural world with the light and sense of sublime, higher space of the supernatural world, as, true to Burke's theories of the sublime, 'the tremendous', 'awful and majestic' glacier fills Frankenstein 'with a sublime ecstasy that gave wings to the soul and allowed it to soar from the obscure world to light and joy' (361). While this Promethean symbolism connects this liminal space with the supernatural realm, Frankenstein again addresses the supernatural 'wandering spirits' (362) that he feels such close proximity to here at the very limit of the natural world. Yet, just as before, upon uttering these words, the only 'spirit' that answers his call is the monster, which suddenly appears amongst the ice and advances toward him 'with superhuman speed' (362).

From this point on, the narrative moves into ever more sublime and vast spaces as Frankenstein seeks to correct the unbalance between the natural and supernatural worlds, eventually culminating in the same vast and icy regions as Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*. Moving from 'the remotest of the Orkneys' (432), across 'immense and rugged mountains of ice' (480), Frankenstein's distance from the natural world is emphasised by the sea, which now becomes a physical 'insuperable barrier between me and my fellow creatures' (439). Eventually Frankenstein progresses so far beyond the limit that even 'the ocean appeared at a distance and formed the utmost boundary of the horizon...Covered with ice, it was only to be distinguished from land by its superior wildness and ruggedness' (478). It is these same 'vast and irregular plains of ice, which seemed to have no end' (279) that Walton associates with Coleridge's poem, and with the Vast and supernatural, believing that 'the phaenomena of the heavenly bodies undoubtedly are in those undiscovered solitudes' (269).

Yet for all its privileging of a liminal space between the natural and supernatural worlds, the material realm is not the only space traversed in the novel. In fact, Frankenstein's journey into progressively more sublime and supernatural spaces parallels his similarly liminal transgression beyond the bounds of everyday consciousness into the spaces of dreams and

madness. Moreover, in line with Coleridge's spatial theories of dreaming and its relationship with the supernatural, while the supernatural world remains physically beyond Frankenstein's grasp, it is through the medium of dreams and altered states of consciousness that Frankenstein finds he can gain access to, and communicate with, the spirit world. Indeed, it is through Frankenstein's own mental and spiritual traversal into the supernatural world – a reversal of his supernatural animation of the creature – that the imbalance that he caused between the natural and supernatural worlds can be restored.

As Knellwolf suggests, 'For the main part, spatial expansiveness' in Romantic writing 'signals a preoccupation with "inner space", a symbolic notion that is motivated not simply by a quasi-medical attempt to make an inventory of mental and psychological processes but an attempt to shed light on the imagination', which was thought to enable 'the intuition of that which was beyond the power of sensory perception: the absolute' (49).⁵¹ Frankenstein's own mental journey through the novel follows this quest for intuition of the absolute as he moves from his initial rational and scientific mindset to one more accommodating of spirits and non-material planes of existence. Importantly, this trajectory, spanned across the duration of the narrative, unfolds like a mesmeric induction, as Frankenstein falls more heavily into the mental spaces of dreams and trance, until he is finally able to access the supernatural realm, and indeed, becomes both 'possessed' and like a ghost himself. Along the way, Shelley employs many of the associations with mesmerism and phantasmagoria to question the ambiguity and hesitation surrounding the reality of dreams and the supernatural, and likewise employs the discourse of madness to counterpoint, and yet ultimately support, her supernaturally-driven narrative.

The first occasion of Frankenstein's growing trance-state occurs near the beginning of the narrative when his desires to surpass the limits of nature and human knowledge are expressed

⁵¹ Knellwolf's analysis locates an important part of the relationship between ideas of the 'absolute' (if not specifically supernatural) and psychology, and the ways that this relationship was explored via geographical metaphors in Romantic literature. However, her view also seems limited by failing to take into account the wider supernatural implications of Schelling's ideas of 'the invisible world' and the specific ways this related to a physical space beyond that of the material world. In this latter view, as has been explored in previous chapters, it is not so much that the numinous or absolute is located within the body – as emotions or psychological processes bound within a physical brain – but that these emotions and psychological processes, particularly altered states of consciousness, extend beyond this physical casing and access that 'higher' world. In Coleridge's ideas of dreaming and the supernatural, the supernatural world, while existing within the natural, also existed beyond it, much like the later theories of hyperspace would suggest that higher-dimensional space occupied and yet reached beyond three-dimensional space. The distinction is a subtle but important one as it relates to the wider context of investigation into space (and Romantic ideas of the Vast), the supernatural and its access via altered states of consciousness. In this investigation, physical space was as important as concepts of mental and imaginary space. It is this paradoxical idea of the overlap between psychological-dream space and 'the Vast' that was expressed in Coleridge's poetry, and which Shelley explores so evocatively in her novel.

as the result of ‘an almost supernatural enthusiasm’ (311) and ‘passing trance’ in which ‘a resistless and almost frantic impulse urged me forward; I seemed to have lost all soul or sensation but for this one pursuit’ (315). When Frankenstein finally evokes the ‘daemon’s’ spirit, and his dreams become a waking nightmare, this trance-state deepens exponentially until it begins to merge into supernatural haunting. Initially, ‘Six years had elapsed, passed as a dream but for one indelible trance’ (339), but towards the close of the narrative, ‘the whole series of my life appeared to me as a dream; I sometimes doubted if indeed it were all true, for it never presented itself to my mind with the force of reality’ (449). As Frankenstein spends more and more time in this trance-state, he becomes increasingly wraith-like, and begins to take on qualities that mirror the supernatural ‘daemon’ he ‘loosed’ upon the world. After Justine’s death, in which she passed ‘the awful boundary between life and death’ (351), Frankenstein ‘wandered like an evil spirit’ (353). Later, he describes himself as ‘a miserable wretch, haunted by a curse’ (423), and, in appropriately liminal imagery, he ‘saw an insurmountable barrier placed between me and my fellow men’ (427). ‘Separated’ from humanity, Frankenstein wanders ‘like a restless spectre’ (439), ‘a shattered wreck – the shadow of a human being’ (454), ‘possessed’ by thoughts ‘that the fiend followed me’ (431), ‘possessed by a kind of nightmare’ (455), or ‘possessed by a maddening rage’ that becomes ‘the devouring...passion of my soul’ (472). Such repeated use of the word ‘possessed’ when referring to Frankenstein’s mind and emotions recalls Coleridgean associations of nightmare and madness with supernatural possession (a source that casts interestingly supernatural light on Frankenstein’s claim that ‘a real insanity possessed me’ [461]), and indeed, the entire text hinges on a discourse of madness and delirium that serves to question, and ultimately support, the reality of the supernatural world within the text.

Whenever the monster is mentioned, notions of ‘fancy’, ‘delirium’ and ‘madness’ are close to follow: when Frankenstein reports the monster to others, from his family to the magistrate, his words are thought to be ‘the offspring of delirium’ (457), ‘a form conjured up by my fancy’ (468), ‘the effects of delirium’ (473), and ‘the appearance of madness’ (472). The magistrate hears Frankenstein’s story ‘with that half kind of belief that is given to a tale of spirits and supernatural events; but when he was called upon to act officially in consequence, the whole tide of his incredulity returned’ (471), and indeed Frankenstein actually spends ‘many months’ in solitary isolation, ‘for they had called me mad’ (470). Yet while these persistent associations of Frankenstein’s supernatural experiences with madness by those who interact with him seem to support a sceptical view of the supernatural, they serve as part of a larger discourse of madness that serves to pre-empt such sceptical claims and evoke a hesitation in

the reader more in line with the experience of the fantastic in the earlier Gothic novels. Frankenstein himself pre-empts such criticisms when he admits that his 'tale was not one to announce publicly; its astounding horror would be looked upon as madness by the vulgar' (342). To this, he adds his own personal appeal, warning the reader early on to trust his statements, despite their marvellous nature: 'I well knew that if any other had communicated such a relation to me, I should have looked upon it as the ravings of insanity' (339), but 'Remember, I am not recording the vision of a madman. The sun does not more certainly shine in the heavens than that which I now affirm is true' (312). Also supporting Frankenstein's sanity are Walton, who is convinced of the truth of Frankenstein's tale through witnessing 'the apparition of the monster seen from our ship' (482), and even the monster himself, who through his experiences 'became fully convinced that I was in reality the monster that I am' (379).

This combined discourse of nightmare and madness is important because both are mentioned in rapidly ascending frequency towards the end of the novel as Frankenstein's consciousness increasingly enters the supernatural world via the liminal mediums of trance and dream. As he progresses further into the vast and sublime spaces that represent the liminal overlap between the supernatural worlds, not only does Frankenstein's state of trance deepen, but his awareness and acceptance of the reality of supernatural spirits increases, until, following Clerval's death, he asks: 'And where does he now exist? Is this gentle and lovely being lost forever? ... No, it is not thus; your form...has decayed, but your spirit still visits and consoles your unhappy friend' (425). Kirkby argues that 'In a sense that question – Where does he now exist? – is *the* question of the book. It marks Frankenstein's discovery of the spirit world' (112): 'he who had never seen a spirit, indeed did not believe in them...is increasingly aware of a spirit presence surrounding him' which 'intensifies as the book draws to its close' (112-3). Indeed, as Frankenstein visits the graves of his family, 'The spirits of the departed seemed to flit around and to cast a shadow, which was felt but not seen, around the head of the mourner', and he vows 'By the sacred earth on which I kneel, by the shades that wander near me...and by thee, O Night, and the spirits that preside over thee, to pursue the daemon who caused this misery' (474-5). He is further 'almost assured...that the shades of my murdered friends heard and approved my devotion' (475), and he is later bolstered by 'the spirits of the dead' which 'hovered round and instigated me to toil and revenge' (479).

This expression implying a general acceptance of the reality of spirits prepares the reader for one of the most important examples of dreams within the novel, and a sequence that draws

together the text's previous discourse on the relationship between dreams, madness and the supernatural realm, as Frankenstein's consciousness and sense of reality undergoes a complete reversal. The beginning of the novel was saturated with carefully laid scientific detail about both Frankenstein's scientific interests and the relationships he shared with Elizabeth, Clerval and his father – firmly situated within the waking world. Dreams, when mentioned, were reserved for considerations of the future – the 'dreams' Frankenstein had of his future accomplishments – and after the creation of the monster it was the daemon – the spirit – that haunted him with nightmare in the darkness and in his dreams/madness. However, after Frankenstein's transgression beyond the limit between the natural and supernatural worlds, Frankenstein begins to live more permanently in the liminal mental regions of dreams and trance, and by the end of the novel, following the murders of his family and friends, the reversal is complete. Now it is the nightmarish pursuit of the daemon that becomes his waking occupation, while the aspects that had characterised Frankenstein's ordered, scientific, waking world – Elizabeth, Clerval and his father – have been relegated to the spaces of dreams and the supernatural. It is his waking life that now becomes a nightmare, as he endures the horrors of pursuing the monster over a landscape as liminal and 'unearthly' as the state of mind into which he is immersed and that possesses him so strongly, while his consciousness finds solace and comfort in the idea of supernatural communication with spirits in his dreams:

At this stage, during his pursuit of the monster, 'it was during sleep alone that I could taste joy. O blessed sleep! Often, when most miserable, I sank to repose, and my dreams lulled me even to rapture. The spirits that guarded me had provided these moments, or rather hours, of happiness that I might regain strength to fulfil my pilgrimage. Deprived of this respite, I should have sunk under my hardships. During the day I was sustained and inspirited by the hope of night: for in sleep I saw my friends...Often, when wearied by a toilsome march, I persuaded myself that I was dreaming until night should come and that I should then enjoy reality in the arms of my dearest friends...How did I cling to their dear forms, as sometimes they haunted even my waking hours... At such moments...I pursued my path towards the destruction of the daemon more as a task enjoined by heaven, as the mechanical impulse of some power of which I was unconscious, than as the ardent desire of my soul. (477)

Walton confirms Frankenstein's psychological reversal in emphatically spatial language that conveys the sense of communion with a higher supernatural space within the liminal medium of dreams:

he enjoys one comfort, the offspring of solitude and delirium; he believes that when in dreams he holds converse with his friends and derives from that communion

consolation for his miseries or excitements to his vengeance, that they are not the creations of his fancy, but the beings themselves who visit him *from the regions of a remote world*. (my emphasis, 483)

While seemingly cast in a sceptical light, by the time Walton offers this analysis of Frankenstein's 'delirium', the previous discourse of madness and sanity in relation to Frankenstein's monster has positioned us to accept Frankenstein's communion with the spirits of his beloved departed as perhaps the least fantastic element of the tale. Indeed, much like the other spectral appearances in *Frankenstein*, the physiological effects of 'solitude and delirium' produce the dream state, but it remains ambiguous whether the resulting phantasmagoria is the product of the mind or the product of the mind's access (in this altered state) to a real supernatural realm.⁵² This ambiguous perspective on the relationship between the supernatural world, dreams and madness is what gives *Frankenstein* its Gothic character, and provides the source of its continued terror and public appeal.

Finally, this psychological reversal, in which Frankenstein's waking life becomes his dreaming state, and his nightmares become his reality, and the parallel spatial subversion that sees this reversal occasioned as Frankenstein enters increasingly vast and sublime space, prove to be the means by which Frankenstein is at last able to correct the imbalance between the natural and supernatural worlds that he caused by evoking the daemon's spirit. At the close of the novel, in the 'icy climes' (269) at the extremity of the globe, Frankenstein is now a liminal being himself, poised both physically and psychologically between the natural and supernatural worlds. His death, in which he hastens to 'the forms of the beloved dead' that 'flit before' him (491), finally completes Frankenstein's journey from the natural to the supernatural world. To complete the symbolic circle and close the liminal overlap between the natural and supernatural worlds, the monster too must return to the supernatural realm. Adopting the Promethean metaphor in a neat resolution, the monster will 'seek the most northern extremity of the globe; I shall collect my funeral pile and consume to ashes this miserable frame, that its remains may afford no light to any curious and unhallowed wretch who would create such another as I have been' (496). Born from fire, he will also die by fire, 'the light of that conflagration will fade away' (496) and will remove the 'light' – the secret of his being, as well as the connection between the natural and supernatural worlds – from the world of human knowledge, which will once again be enclosed within its limited obscurity

⁵² Glance analyses the ways that earlier examples of dreams in *Frankenstein* accord with Romantic medical models of dreaming, though he does not discuss this particular episode of 'delirium' and its ambiguous relationship with the supernatural world that has been so clearly realised in the novel up to this point.

and darkness. Indeed, in an echo of his earlier evasion of Frankenstein within the sublime and supernatural mountains regions, immediately after this speech, the monster becomes 'lost in darkness and distance' (497).⁵³

In conclusion, while Shelley and De Quincey are commonly considered very different writers, they exhibit striking similarities in three main ways: in their position as authors writing across the transitional threshold between the Romantic and Victorian eras; their literary blending of poetry and prose; and their concepts of dreams as a liminal space through which the mind can access the supernatural world. These similarities can be attributed to the pervasive influence of both the Gothic aesthetic and Coleridge upon these writers, and the ways that De Quincey and Shelley consciously draw upon Coleridge's conceptual links between dreams, the supernatural, and Vast space to thematise these concerns in their own special forms of Romantic prose. In so doing, they illustrate the way that Coleridge's notion of dreams as liminal gateways into the supernatural world were transmitted into prose literature, and popularised within the works of two of the most iconic and influential writers of the nineteenth century. As such, both De Quincey and Shelley are emblematic of just how fluidly and easily many of the ideas and concepts deemed 'Romantic' continued into the Victorian era, where they were taken up and appropriated with zeal by its authors. It is this thematising of somnial and supernatural space within these works that encourages the century's pervasive interest in supernatural space and dreams, and paves the way for the later popularising of dreams as a literary device through which supernatural 'secondary' worlds might be accessed, and which begins to appear in the works of Dickens, Carroll, Kingsley, MacDonald, and Morris. These writers and the way that their use of dreams and supernatural space led to the development of 'secondary worlds' and with it the first examples of modern fantasy, will be explored in the next chapter.

⁵³ Miller points out the balanced structure that is suggested by the three similar sentences 'lost among the distant inequalities of the ice'... 'lost him among the undulations of the sea of ice'...and 'lost in darkness and distance' that are paced at the beginning, middle and end of the novel (68). Though some critics have cast doubt over whether the reader can be assured that the creature followed through with his plans to annihilate himself, this neat closing of the symbolic circle, its connection with the extended Promethean metaphor, and its drawing on the discourse of vast and sublime space suggests that this action completes the monster's existence upon the earthly plane.

WORLDS BEYOND WORLDS: DREAMS, HYPERSPACE & THE BIRTH OF MODERN FANTASY

By the mid nineteenth century, following its close exploration by writers such as Coleridge, De Quincey and Shelley, the notion of dreams as a liminal space between the natural and supernatural worlds had developed into an increasingly popular literary motif for writers working with concepts of the supernatural. It was a literary motif received with enthusiasm by the second half of the nineteenth century, which saw a marked increase in the already widespread public and scientific interest in the ‘Other World’ through the rapidly flourishing phenomenon of Spiritualism, which climbed in notoriety until its zenith in the 1890s, and which continued the close relationship between alternative states of mind and the supernatural world that had begun to attract medical and scientific attention through the practices of mesmerism in the 1840s. As this interest in the relationship between the supernatural and alternative states of mind grew, so too did literature that sought to imaginatively explore this fascination with the spaces of the mind and the supernatural. Along with the growing popularity of fairy tales, particularly after the English translations of Anderson and the Grimm brothers (Matthews 17), reputable novelists, including Charles Dickens, Charles Kingsley, Lewis Carroll, George MacDonald, and William Morris, engaged with notions of the supernatural and concepts of dream space in complex ways.¹

This chapter examines the treatments of space and the accompanying levels of realism in these works across the final half of the nineteenth century. It analyses the increasing exploration of supernatural space in these novels – a development that, as will be explored, occurs simultaneously with the growing public interest in space and hyperspace. Likewise, it finds that these texts exhibit an increasing sense of realism in their treatments of the supernatural and supernatural space. As spiritualism and hyperspace philosophies encourage serious enquiries into supernatural space, these novels begin to shed the hesitation that characterizes the Gothic and Romantic works – the literary fantastic – and adopt instead a realism in their representations of the supernatural to become Britain’s first examples of literary fantasy.

¹ Zipes believes that Dickens, Carroll and MacDonald are ‘the three most important writers and defenders of fairy tales from 1840 to 1880’ (122).

Importantly, as literature and science attempted to map the supernatural world in ever-increasing detail, dreams began to take on an increasingly important function, where they not only afforded a state of mind through which supernatural beings might be perceived, or through which spirits might interact with a human consciousness, but they also formed a liminal passage through which the supernatural world itself might be permeated and explored by the ‘subliminal self’ that was the dreaming mind. In Dickens, Kingsley, and the early work of Carroll and MacDonald, we see this liminal function of dream space explored in growing detail as protagonists begin to not merely perceive supernatural spirits while in the dream state, but to step through the space of the dream itself into supernatural space beyond. In the early works of Carroll and MacDonald especially, it is within this beyond space that the principle action of the narrative is set, and the dream functions only briefly as a portal through which the ‘other’ world is accessed, though the experiences within this space retain the characteristic ambiguity that had been associated with psychic phenomena since the late eighteenth century.

By the 1870s however, this developing literary trend toward exploring supernatural realms via the liminal space of the dream would undergo another transformation: one that was again closely linked with the scientific and philosophical contexts from which it was originally produced. In 1873, the English mathematician William Clifford translated Georg Bernhard Riemann’s 1854 lecture, which first proposed the notion of a fourth dimension, for the scientific journal *Nature*. Initially a solely theoretical concept, it was introduced into the English public imagination soon after when physics professor Johann Zollner employed the notion of higher-dimensional space to explain the apparently supernatural tricks performed by American psychic Henry Slade, and thereby gave to proponents of Spiritualism the scientific ‘proof’ they had been seeking for the reality of supernatural spirits. As explored in Chapter One, the appearance of these theories seemed to give scientific credence to ideas of the supernatural world that had previously been imagined in ways that prefigured exactly this kind of higher-dimensional ‘beyond’ space. By amalgamating the supernatural world with higher-dimensional space, spiritual intrusions into the three-dimensional space of the natural world became explicable and natural. Importantly, it was quickly postulated that the key to accessing such higher-dimensional space was via altered states of mind, an idea that accorded well with the practices of mediums, clairvoyants, psychics, and mesmerists. The general interest that such ideas garnered is indicated by claim, in 1894 by the spiritualist magazine *The Unknown World*, that ‘the UNKNOWN WORLD is once more exercising its fascination

in some one or other of its varied forms upon most who think and live at the end of this nineteenth century' (1-2).

This merger between science and the supernatural would not long withhold its influence on literature, where it began to shape the literary exploration of the kinds of 'beyond' spaces previously explored via the liminal medium of the dream. It is fitting that it is in the works of two of the most influential Victorian fantasists, Lewis Carroll and George MacDonald, that the transition from dream space to hyperspace can be most clearly seen: where their earlier fiction had utilised the liminal medium of the dream to access 'beyond' space, their later works are the first to combine dream space with the emerging notion of hyperspace to explore complex formulations of reality, space and the mind, and particularly their relationship with the imagination and the supernatural.²

Yet while these writers engaged specifically with notions of hyperspace and its correlations with multi-dimensional mental space, the increasingly detailed material depiction of such beyond spaces, where the protagonists ventured further and further into fully-realised supernatural landscapes, would lead finally to the shedding of the liminal dream frame altogether. While Carroll and MacDonald's fantasies remained attached in some way to the natural world, involving some method of liminal transportation from natural to supernatural space – a dream or a mirror – it is in the work of Morris that this space began to be explored in its own right and literature begins to be set completely in a world defined by its own natural, often magical, laws. While Morris's early works engage closely with dreams, in his later works the protagonist does not enter supernatural space from the everyday world, but is situated entirely within this space altogether in a literary creation that sees the imagined world completely divorced from its relationship with the primary world of everyday experience. As explored in the previous chapters, space and place were always central to fantastic narratives, but now they take on especial significance as wonders in themselves: the very land that the characters walk on is marvellous – an otherworld curiosity. It is with this important step that literature's first true secondary worlds are created, appropriately created with recourse to the

² It is important to note that Carroll's text is too early to engage directly with the hyperspace philosophies themselves, but Throesch makes a convincing argument that he does engage with the mathematical theories that would lead to these philosophies, while the spatial focus of his work and the particular construction of his dreamworlds would allow his work to be received by later readers as a representation of hyperspace itself; an association that would have a marked impact on the development of both fantasy and science fiction writing into the twentieth century, as well as popular conceptions of hyperspace philosophy (see below).

medieval romances that Gothic literature revived in the eighteenth century.³ It is this transition from Gothic supernatural tales set in the 'real' world, to supernatural lands accessed via the dream portal, and finally, the complete realisation and mapping of these spaces as concrete realities in themselves, or 'secondary worlds', that constitutes the evolution of the modern fantasy genre and sees the birth, through the writings of Morris, of modern secondary world fantasy.

VICTORIAN DREAMS & THE SUPERNATURAL WORLD

The close focus on dreams in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries cemented a growing interest in phenomena of the mind during the Victorian era. As Bown argues:

Although speculation about the nature of dreams had formed a current in Enlightenment thinking about the nature of the human mind, this developed in the course of the nineteenth century into an explosion of interest in the nature of dreams...At the centre of these debates was the problem of whether dreams, and by extension, the human mind are supernatural or material...Because the boundaries between the supernatural and the material were both contested and obscure, the debate was not simply a question of whether dreams had a supernatural origin or not. On the contrary, theorists repeatedly discuss the origin of dreams in order to elucidate the relationship between mind, body, soul and spirit, and between our human consciousness and whatever supernatural forces or beings might surround us. (159)

From the 1830s, the desire to explain dreams in 'empirically-based materialist' terms contends 'with the widespread desire...to preserve the possibility of dreams, and the mind, as

³ Morris and MacDonald 'not only established radical, imaginative, antirealistic modes of fiction as antitheses to the realistic modes so popular at the time but recovered long-neglected vocabulary, syntax, and patterns of archetypal invention similar to many of the long-lost texts being rediscovered' (Matthews 16). Significantly, Manlove suggests that 'MacDonald uses a medieval context not for nostalgic reasons but because it allows the kind of fluidity of narrative and imagery of the mind that he is looking for' ('Writing Fantasy' 73). It was a historical focus with a deep contemporary relevance: 'William Morris's passionate delight in gothic literature was to lead him directly to socialism' (Prickett 17). See also Naslas's 'Medievalism in Morris's Aesthetic Theory.' Such Gothic focus illustrates the continuation of Gothic and Romantic concerns in the literature of the mid-to-late nineteenth century, and in particular, the connection between dreams and supernatural space that the Gothic and Romantic writers had established, which supports the notion that the emergence of the modern fantasy genre was a process of evolution across the century. The same trend of literary influence can be applied to Coleridge: Prickett suggests that 'One way of seeing the roots of Victorian fantasy, as it were, in microcosm, is to look at the way in which the Victorians approached and attempted to interpret *The Ancient Mariner*' (*Victorian Fantasy* 33). 'In addition to reissues and combinations,' Coleridge's poem 'went through no less than ten different illustrated editions between 1850 and 1900 – the rate of publication climbing steeply towards the end of the century' (26). 'For many, it summed up the phantasmagoria of a dream-world that some have argued is the aim (conscious or unconscious) of nearly all Victorian art' (33) and 'the tension between apparent irrationality and hidden meaning manages to imply the existence of "other worlds", mysterious and yet almost familiar, lying just beyond the frontiers of our normal world – and somehow connected with it' (34).

supernatural' (Bown 165). While many physiological, psychological and other theories of dreaming abounded in the mid-nineteenth century, an 1865 article in the *Eclectic Review* entitled 'Such Stuff as Dreams are Made of' illustrates the pull that supernatural explanations of dreaming, and particularly the concept of dreams as a liminal space of overlap between the natural and supernatural worlds, held for writers following the eager explorations of such ideas by writers, philosophers and thinkers in the early decades of the nineteenth century:

But, indeed, dreams, if not of supernatural origin, completely confuse and perplex all ideas which found them on mere naturalism. It is in the kingdom of dreams that the two worlds of the natural and the supernatural seem to be so united that it is impossible, with any degree of accuracy, to define in what part of the mysterious and spectral isthmus the domain of the natural terminates, and the region of the supernatural beings.⁴

The article continues that the supernatural is 'a region with laws of its own, beyond the code of our navigation, the limitations of our quadrant, and the application of our signals' (525), 'into which', as Bown points out, 'anyone might enter in their dreams' (165).⁵ Likewise, John Addington Symonds, himself a sceptic concerning the supernatural origin of dreams, nevertheless acknowledges 'that they have seemed to bridge over the mysterious chasm which divides us from *the invisible world and its shadowy inhabitants*' (my emphasis),⁶ while Charles Bray's 1866 *Force, its Mental and Moral Correlates and on that which is supposed to underlie all phenomena: with speculations on Spiritualism, and other abnormal conditions of mind*, privileged a mental basis for communication with the spiritual world by arguing that both the mind and the world perceived by it are made up of 'force':

External force, acting upon our peculiar organization, produces the phantom which we call the world: how, then, can spirit be *more ethereal* than this external force? or how can ghosts be more ghosts than what we call *gross material matter*? Spirits, therefore, if they exist, cannot be more ethereal; they may, however, be unseen, or we may be unconscious of their existence, because they may have no relation to our senses. (73)

Likewise, 'Time and Space are only "modes of thought," and can have no objective existence, or rather that the reality cannot accord with our conception' (73). Bray asks 'need there be space, therefore, necessarily separating mind from mind?' (75): 'In trance...and under hypnotism and mesmerism...the barriers between' the mind 'and other minds, and between it

⁴ 'Such Stuff as Dreams are Made of', *Eclectic Review*, New Series, 9 (1865), 516-30: p. 525.

⁵ Bown's article adeptly discusses many different theories of dreaming that abounded in the mid-nineteenth century in relation to the depiction of dreams in contemporary paintings. However, while she employs spatial language to describe nineteenth-century conceptions of the supernatural 'world', Bown does not discuss the spatial nature of these beliefs, nor the particular philosophical, literary and cultural significance of the way that dreaming space was constructed as a liminal space between the natural and supernatural worlds.

⁶ *Sleep and Dreams: Two Lectures*. London: John Murray, 1851. 87.

and the general mind, are partially broken down' (84). This notion of mind as a force that transgresses boundaries between minds (imagined as spatial entities), is an idea with obvious ramifications for the parallel notion of space separating mind from spirit, and the natural from the supernatural world, and it is this kind of argument that the Spiritualists would perpetuate in their support of communication with the supernatural world, and that would have such a profound impact on the development of fantastic literature as the century progressed. Indeed, for Manlove, it is from the 1840s and 1850s, when this general 'interest in the subconscious and in the nature of dreams', reflected in the 'young discipline of psychology' begins to impact heavily on literature, 'that we see the beginnings of an interest in writing literary fantasy, in writers such as F. E. Paget, Dickens, Ruskin, Browning and Thackeray' ('Writing Fantasy' 62).

BRIDGES BETWEEN WORLDS: DREAMS & THE SUPERNATURAL IN DICKENS

As one of the Victorian era's most well-known, prolific, and influential writers, not only does Charles Dickens both exemplify and encourage the growing interest in the supernatural over the course of his writing from the 1830s to 1870s,⁷ but he also explicitly engages with the notion of dreams as a liminal space between the natural and supernatural worlds. As a writer commonly associated with the tradition of literary realism,⁸ Dickens's lifelong fascination with the occult and dreams, and the prevalence of these themes within his novels, short stories, and the magazines that he edited and contributed to, stands as testament to the powerful public appeal that dreams and the supernatural had for the increasingly wide Victorian readership that consumed his works. Yet while critics have variously analysed Dickens's theoretical and creative involvement with dreams, the occult and fairytales (focusing especially on his novels),⁹ scholars have yet to examine the important ways in which Dickens engages with the developing Victorian spatial imagination exemplified by

⁷ 'Dickens had a central role in the development of the Victorian ghost story', and as a journalist, he 'had an important role in influencing the public mind on matters supernatural' (Henson 44).

⁸ See Ireland. Stone suggests that the supernatural elements in Dickens's work are 'deceptive' because 'his storybook effects are usually part of a captivating and compelling realism' (xi).

⁹ See Harry Stone's *Dickens and the Invisible World: Fairytales, Fantasy and Novel-Making* for the most in-depth examination of Dickens's use of fairy tales, folklore, myths, legends, enchantments, dreams and other 'mysterious murmurings of the invisible world' (xi). See Fred Kaplan's *Dickens and Mesmerism: The Hidden Springs of Fiction* for a detailed account of Dickens's personal and literary engagement with mesmerism, dreams, and related spiritual phenomena, and Taylor Stoehr's *The Dreamer's Stance* for an analysis of dreams as literary devices in Dickens's fiction.

writers such as Shelley and De Quincey, and the way that this spatial imagination was applied to both the spaces of dreams and the supernatural within his work. Through his many ghost stories, which were published in his magazines, *Household Words* and *All The Year Round*, Dickens created a textual space through which to explore contemporary theories of supernaturalism and dreaming, and so elevated the liminal conflation of somnial and supernatural space to a new height of public appeal and literary longevity with significant effects for the developing tradition of literary fantasy.¹⁰

According to John Forster, so deep was Dickens's 'interest generally in things supernatural that, but for the strong restraining power of his common sense, he might have fallen into the follies of spiritualism' (cited in Henson 44). Dickens himself admitted, 'I have always had a strong interest in the subject, and never knowingly lose an opportunity of pursuing it...Don't suppose I am so bold and arrogant as to settle what can and what cannot be, after death. The truth is not so at all' (cited in Henson 44). An avid member of The Ghost Club, which was formally established in 1862 as one of the earliest societies to scientifically investigate supernatural phenomena following the rapid rise of spiritualism across England, Dickens used his magazines to accumulate ghost stories as a way of assessing and understanding the phenomena: an approach that 'would be institutionalised' in the later Society for Psychical Research in 1882 (Henson 61). As Henson suggests, in his magazines, particularly *ATYR*, 'Dickens was clearly responding to the climate of supernaturalism that had been shaped by the growth of Spiritualism. The ghost story served as both a popular form of entertainment and as a subject of philosophical debate and scientific investigation' (59). Through his own ghost stories, Dickens would engage closely with many of the prevailing theories behind supernatural phenomena. His characteristic hesitation over the empirical reality of the supernatural is closely reflected in the ways in which he engaged in the literary tradition of the Gothic,¹¹ which relied so heavily on just this sense of hesitation, as well as the important ways in which he utilised the developing literary motif of dream space as a liminal medium through which the supernatural world could be accessed.

¹⁰ Dickens would also explore these themes in novels such as *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, which was heavily influenced by De Quincey's Gothic dream-texts. The construction of dream space in Dickens's novels presents an avenue for further research. On *Drood* and mesmerism, see especially Schmitt and Smith. See also Christopher Herbert's 'De Quincey and Dickens' for the close autobiographical and thematic links between the life and writings of these writers.

¹¹ Schmitt claims Dickens's *Oliver* as the 'initiator and exemplar of the Gothic romance in the Victorian period' (302), and also argues that 'A direct line can be drawn from the architecture of the eponymous castle of Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) to the labyrinthine streets, hidden byways, and nightmarish pockets of squalor that distinguish Dickens's London': a Gothicising of London initiated by De Quincey (Schmitt 303-4).

In 1851, ‘Dickens claimed about dreams that he had “read something on the subject, and had long observed it with the greatest attention and interest”’ (Kaplan 216). Through his wide reading on the subject of dreams and the supernatural, Dickens ‘created a synthesis of varied kinds of experiences about the occult, the strange apparitions of nature, the meaning and power of dreams, phrenology, mesmerism,’ and believed that dreams were ‘special states of consciousness...in which we can know more about ourselves and our environment than in times of normal functioning, when fundamental truths are hidden from us by mechanisms of deceit’ (Kaplan 217). This association of the supernatural with dreams was important for Dickens because while he maintained a generally sceptical attitude toward much physical supernatural phenomena,¹² it was in ‘Ghost stories illustrating particular states of mind and processes of the imagination’ that he found the greatest fascination. As Henson writes:

Apparitions and spectral volumes were widely discussed in early and mid-nineteenth-century mental philosophy in relation to the involuntary functions of the mind, including dreaming, somnambulism, reverie and more serious cases of mental derangement. Dickens was well read in such material. Throughout his life, he collected ghost stories as an important source of enquiry into the mysteries of the mind. (Henson 45)

The same context that produced the supernatural somnial spaces of Shelley and De Quincey’s texts,¹³ this Victorian interest in the correlation between the spaces of the mind and the supernatural manifested most tellingly in Dickens’s ghost stories. Where many of Dickens’s ghosts take on a humorous and distinctly unterrifying nature, it is in the hesitation occasioned by mental phenomena that Dickens achieves his most chilling illustrations of the supernatural, and through which he most clearly demonstrates his adoption of the literary motif of dreams as portals through which the supernatural world could be accessed. As examples, both ‘The Madman’s Manuscript’ from *Pickwick Papers* (1836), and ‘The Signalman’ (1866) privilege the ambiguity of mental and supernatural phenomena to achieve such chilling realism in their representations of the ghostly, but it is in the more humorous ‘The Goblins who Stole a Sexton’ from *Pickwick Papers*, which in many ways appears as an early version of his later successful *A Christmas Carol*, that Dickens employs the dream as a vehicle through which to physically enter supernatural space.

¹² Dickens once proclaimed that he did not believe in ghosts ‘because he had seen too many of them’; a statement that seems to refer at once to the generic exhaustion of the popular ghost story since its rise to popularity in the 1830s with writers such as Radcliffe (a theme he explores in his own ghost fictions), and the widespread nature of its real life counterpart.

¹³ Importantly, Dickens also knew Coleridge’s *Ancient Mariner* well, and alluded specifically to it in *David Copperfield* (Stone 250).

Dickens's 'The Madman's Manuscript' strongly echoes the ambiguous relationship of uncertainty between madness, dreams and the supernatural in Shelley's *Frankenstein* – particularly the pivotal scene in which Frankenstein is locked in a solitary cell with only the spirits of the dead to accompany his mad ravings – as well as notions of spiritual possession through the dream state that recall those explored by Coleridge. Resembling the similar narrative voices of Frankenstein's monster – the madman has 'the strength of a giant', and 'the light of madness gleamed from' his eyes 'like fire' (33) – and the later *Jekyll and Hyde*, he seems reliable and honest, with the exception of his label as a 'madman' (though in a context of madness as supernatural possession, this does not necessarily make him an unreliable narrator on matters supernatural), and unafraid to admit his actions, taking on a confessional tone that remains unquestioned, uninterrupted as it is by any mediating or contrasting opinions through which the reader might distance themselves from the speaker. Confined in the cell, the madman relates how he mixes 'up realities with my dreams' (32), and describes 'dreadful dreams' in which he saw 'Large dusky forms with sly and jeering faces crouched in the corners of the room, and bent over my bed at night, tempting me to madness' (27). The evocation of both Victorian theories of madness as an inability to distinguish between waking and dreaming, and as demonic possession is characteristic of Dickens's ambiguous approach to the reality of the supernatural. Through these descriptions, the question remains of whether the spirits he sees and hears are a product of his insanity, or whether his mind, being altered and more akin to a dream-state, allows him to access the spirit world. In the mental physiology of the mid-nineteenth-century spectral illusions were viewed, in the words of the pre-eminent physician Henry Holland, as a link "in the chain betwixt sound reason and madness" (Henson 52). However, from the madman's perspective, it was the supernatural spirits that cause the madness to 'at last' come 'upon me' (27), as he is 'borne upon the arms of demons' (35).

Importantly, it is in a final apparition that the ambiguous reality of the spirits is reinforced. The madman relates that 'in the bright moonlight nights, when I start up from my sleep...I see, standing still and motionless in one corner of this cell, a slight and wasted figure with long black hair, which...stirs with no earthly wind, and eyes that fix their gaze on me, and never wink or close' (29). With its hint of mesmerism in the fixed gaze and glassy eyes, this ghost is nevertheless presented in a different class from the other spirits that possess the madman's mind: 'much more dreadful...it comes fresh from the grave; and is so very deathlike' (29). The distinction between the possessing spirits and this much more 'real' ghost, associated with the unearthly – a world beyond the grave – is significant, suggesting as

it does that while the madman's altered state of mind may create the visions and voices of the possessing spirits, it is this altered state of mind that allows him to perceive a true spectre from beyond the grave.

In a similar way, it is within his wry supernatural tale 'The Goblins who Stole a Sexton' that the altered state of mind afforded by dreams is used as a vehicle through which to enter supernatural space, and in which themes of liminality are applied to the physical, rather than solely mental, landscape in the text. The story is set in Gothic liminal spaces – on the eve of Christmas, at 'twilight', in a Gothic churchyard that is quieter than the 'bottom of the oldest grave' (40). So liminal is this setting that the distance between life and death, or the natural and supernatural worlds seems reduced: snow lies so thickly over the churchyard 'that it seemed as if corpses lay there, hidden only by their winding sheets' (40). It is within this liminal landscape that Gabriel sees a figure who 'made his blood run cold' with 'astonishment and terror': 'a strange unearthly figure, whom Gabriel felt at once was no being of this world' (40). This 'goblin king' proceeds to draw Gabriel 'through the earth' into 'a large cavern, surrounded on all sides by crowds of goblins, ugly and grim': an even more liminal space now existing both within and beyond the natural world. In this liminal space between nature and supernature, Gabriel is subjected to many visions designed to teach him, much like the later 'A Christmas Carol' (1843), 'that it was a very decent and respectable sort of world after all' (49).

At this stage, Gabriel's supernatural experience, including his descent into the liminal cavern, is presented as quite literal and real. However, the experience gradually begins to take on suggestions of the dream, and the space of the cavern begins to amalgamate with the space of the dream: both overlapping and liminal spaces between the natural and supernatural worlds. In this latter sense, Gabriel's 'descent' into the cavern mimics the descent into the realms of sleep, dreams and the caverns of the subconscious. In this space, Gabriel is 'without power of motion' (45), a loss of volition commonly explored in dreams, as he is subjected to a phantasmagoria of shifting visions, enforced by the supernatural beings within this space. Finally, it is via the medium of sleep that Gabriel is returned to his position above ground, and the entire supernatural experience, which has had a distinct impact upon the 'altered man' (50), is cast once again into the realm of uncertainty by the dreaming state's ambiguous and liminal position between reality and imagination: in the cave, no sooner does Gabriel learn his lesson 'than the cloud which settled over the last picture, seemed to settle on his senses, and lull him to repose. One by one the goblins faded from his sight; and as the last one

disappeared, he sank to sleep' (49), only to wake once again 'on the flat gravestone in the churchyard' (50). The 'wicker bottle lying empty by his side' is yet another element that destabilises the reality of Gabriel's experience as a physical phenomenon, yet can not approach the reality of his experience as a mental one, despite the layering of superstition and ridiculous credulity that Dickens supplies in the villagers' 'great many speculations about' Gabriel's adventure (50). Upon waking and observing no footprints left by the goblins in the snow, Gabriel himself 'begins to doubt the reality of his adventures...but he speedily accounted for this circumstance when he remembered that, beings spirits, they would leave no visible impression behind them' (50). 'Beyond proof', the reality of these spirits remains ambiguous to the end of the text, even through Dickens's ironic tone, which is applied as equally to the alternately sceptical and superstitious interpretations of the villagers, as it is to the veracity of Gabriel's tale.

Finally, one of Dickens's most realistic representations of ghosts occurs in 'The Signalman', in which the apparitions are a form of premonition – an apparition not of the past, but of the future – and it is this presentiment that renders them uncanny and inexplicable, both for the narrator and the reader. The fact that it is a premonition of a future event renders this ghost not a physical haunting – a repetition of a past event – but a psychological phenomena, which explains the fact that it is only the Signalman who can see and hear the apparition, even when the narrator is present. Where ghosts of the past take on a humorous and ironic tone in Dickens's fiction, often associated with generic Gothic elements such as rattling chains and banging doors, apparitions connected with powers of mind – imagination, altered perception, precognition – exist outside scientific or fraudulent domains, and this is where their chilling power lies. This is the area of spectral theory that held the most potential for reality in Dickens's mind. Further, it is a mark of Dickens's irony that the very psychological nature of these apparitions would also be the catalyst in bringing about the death they herald, for it is the Signalman's failure to distinguish between his psychological 'apparitions' and the physical train that would run him down. The lingering ambiguity and paradox is that had the Signalman continued to treat his visions as reality, he would have survived: it was his hesitation in judging the reality of the oncoming train that caused his death.

In this way, while Dickens presents the supernatural as mental phenomena, his work engages with the discourses of mental and supernatural overlap explored by De Quincey and Shelley to posit such mental phenomena as empirically real, rather than simply imaginary. It is this privileging of altered states of mind as legitimate ways to access the supernatural, as well as

the popularising of supernatural themes itself, through which Dickens's fiction impacts upon the developing fantasy genre.

DREAMING OF FAIRYLAND: KINGSLEY, CARROLL, MACDONALD & THE EVOLUTION OF IMAGINATION

While Dickens's writing consolidated the growing popularity of the supernatural, and particularly its literary, philosophical and scientific association with dreams from the 1830s onward, there were other writers from the mid nineteenth century who began to use the literary motif of liminal dream space to venture further into the supernatural realm, and explore this space in more detail within their fiction. In 1862, the same year that The Ghost Club was established, Charles Kingsley's *The Water Babies: A Fairy Tale for a Land-baby* was serialised in *Macmillan's Magazine*, and published as a novel the following year. Often hailed as a 'highly eccentric "landmark" text' that is 'claimed to have marked the beginning of the first "golden age" of British children's literature' (Hunt 23), *The Water Babies* engages with the prevailing discourses on dreams, the imagination, science and the supernatural to move beyond the cerebral dream space explored by Coleridge, Shelley, De Quincey and Dickens, and instead utilise the dream as a liminal portal through which to access the realm of fairyland within the infinite spaces of the natural world. In Kingsley 'the Vast' moves inward to encompass the infinitesimal details of the natural world being scrutinised under the microscopes of the rapidly developing sciences.

Tom's transformation into a supernatural being and his journey into awareness of and into the physical space of the supernatural fairies is effected first by a hypnotic state of somnambulism, as he walks 'between sleep and awake' to the river side (37), after which he is immersed fully in both the water (in a symbol of baptismal rebirth), and in dream, which is also a kind of death: 'The reason of his falling into such a delightful sleep is...that the fairies took him' (39). The use of the dream as a transition into supernatural space is significant in Kingsley because it affords Tom the ability to perceive the supernatural creatures that abound within nature but remain invisible to the adults of the everyday world – an altered state of consciousness that mirrors the mesmeric access to the supernatural realm explored by Coleridge, De Quincey, Shelley and Dickens. This idea is emphasised by contrast with both Tom's prior state of being, and the scientific attitudes of Victorian adults that blind them to

the reality of the supernatural within nature: when Tom is finally allowed to perceive the other water babies, 'he knew he had been hearing and seeing' them 'all along; only he did not know them, because his eyes and ears were not opened' (117); and in the same way, adults cannot see Tom 'because their eyes were not opened – as, indeed, most people's eyes are not' (155). The answer, Kingsley proposes, is to embrace the spiritual powers of imagination, and ignore the narrator's ironic advice that 'this is a fairytale, and...you are not to believe one word of it, even if it is true' (51).

In the minute details of nature, appreciated as part of this greater web, one can transcend the material realm and see the infinity of God within it. Science, for Kingsley, can either help or hinder this approach. Scientific developments allow a closer observation of nature, but science must be united with imagination – the Romantic sense of imagination as intimately linked with divinity and spiritual awareness of the divine workings in the universe – in order to fully see what the microscope reveals. Science divorced from this power of imagination produces the limited perception of intellectuals such as Professor Pthmlnsprts, who look at a supernatural creature and yet blindly insist, despite the lack of evidence, or even despite the presence of evidence to the contrary, that it cannot exist, and must therefore be a figment of imagination or dream (100). The limits of such a view are indicated by the wider privileging of imagination and dream throughout the text. For Kingsley, so heavily influenced by the Romantics, the purest transition of the human mind from the everyday world into the elevated powers of the imagination is via this medium of the dream.

While Kingsley's work utilised the medium of the dream to enter the infinite spaces within the natural world, literature was emerging at this time that began to step through these dream portals into entirely different worlds altogether. The most famous example of Victorian literature that enters such dream worlds is surely Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* (1865). A friend of Kingsley's, Carroll 'read *The Water Babies* before publication and when he was at work on *Alice*' (Prickett 43), and Kingsley also read Carroll's unfinished *Alice* manuscript, and urged him to publish it. The dream-frame of *Alice*, with its tumble down the rabbit-hole into Wonderland, and 'the dream-child moving through a land / Of wonders wild and new' (Carroll 7), has become famous as an example of the literary nonsense genre, where its dream frame has often been seen as an excuse to indulge in its entertaining nonsense and wordplay. However, the intimate way in which it engages with the developing discourses on dreams, space, spiritualism, and the imagination, as well its importance within the developing modern fantasy genre, are less widely known. Rather than a merely cerebral, nonsensical construction,

as has often been argued, Carroll's Wonderland represents a neat blending of supernatural and mental space, and engages with the tradition of literary fantasy developed previously by writers such as Kingsley, Thackeray and Ruskin, to create an ambiguous dreaming space that teeters on the brink of reality – in the liminal space between waking and sleeping.

That Carroll's story engages specifically with a prior tradition of literary fantasy is suggested by the particular way in which it constructs space, where Wonderland is imagined as a dream space that accords, in much the same way as Kingsley's and Dickens's, with the notion of fairyland and its dual connotations of supernatural folklore and imaginative literature for children (a genre that Carroll's text was instrumental in establishing in Britain). In separate diary entries detailing the story's initial inspiration, Carroll refers to his story as a 'fairy-tale,' which was told to child listeners 'hungry for news of fairy-land,' and details the way in which, 'in a desperate attempt to strike out some new line of fairy-lore, I had sent my heroine straight down a rabbit-hole' (cited in Gardener 7-8). Like Alice's own reference to her reading of fairytales, this constant reference to fairyland and fairytales indicates the literary heritage of Carroll's text, and serves to undermine interpretations that see the text as pure nonsense. Instead, it suggests a way of reading the text that is much more akin to the process of hesitation involved in the literary fantastic exemplified by authors from Shelley to Kingsley. In this alternative way of reading, the dream serves not to discount Alice's experiences in the Somnial Space of Wonderland, but to evoke the hesitation and ambiguity so crucial to discourses of dreaming and psychology across the nineteenth century. In this context, Alice's dream is not merely an idle figment of imagination, but becomes a powerful medium through which to destabilise concepts of reality, and the boundaries between sleeping and waking.

Carroll's direction 'down the rabbit hole' in search of new 'fairy-lore' is significant in several ways. As well as recalling liminal constructions of fairyland within the earth, such as those explored by Dickens and Kingsley, and obviously symbolising a descent into the caverns of the subconscious mind, Alice's fall down the rabbit hole mimics the process of falling asleep, and as she falls she does actually fall asleep, 'and had just begun to dream' when she suddenly lands at the bottom. From this point onward, Alice emerges within the Somnial Space of Wonderland and encounters many strange creatures there in one of literature's most memorable depictions of dreaming space. However, this method of entering the dreamworld, as well as several crucial elements within the story, destabilise any simplistic divisions between Alice's sleeping and waking worlds. Importantly, rather than restricting his fantastic

content to the dream world, Carroll has Alice fall asleep in this hole only after she has already observed the fantastic talking rabbit with his pocket-watch, and the strange doors and cupboards in the walls of the hole as she falls down it. The timing is crucial for the sense of suspended disbelief: the occurrence of these elements before Alice's sleep is actually described (despite the assumption that she may already be asleep by this point) destabilises the boundaries between sleep and waking in the tale, and allow it to be enjoyed with that ambiguity and hesitation so crucial to the fantastic text, as the readers 'half believe it true' (Carroll 7).

Significantly, this destabilising of the boundaries between waking and sleeping, reality and fantasy, continue the nineteenth-century discourse on dreaming and madness that Shelley engaged with so closely in *Frankenstein*, and that Dickens would continue depicting in his ghost stories. On February 9, 1856, Carroll wrote in his diary:

Query: when we are dreaming and, as often happens, have a dim consciousness of the fact and try to wake, do we not say and do things which in waking life would be insane? May we not then sometimes define insanity as an inability to distinguish which is the waking and which the sleeping life? We often dream without the least suspicion of unreality: "Sleep hath its own world," and it is often as lifelike as the other. (cited in Gardner 67)

The spatial language of this extract is notable for its construction of a distinct dream world, as is its suggestion that Alice's inability to distinguish between reality and dream, like her reader's, play into a discourse of madness that is reflected throughout the text (this suggestion becomes even more pronounced in the Red King's Dream in *Through the Looking-Glass*, explored below). The Cheshire Cat believes everyone who enters or exists in Wonderland is mad (66), and the inverted logic and apparent nonsense of Wonderland, as well as the characters of the Mad Hatter and March Hare, perhaps support this association of madness with a conflation of dreaming and waking worlds, though the precision of the actual logic encoded within these 'nonsense' puzzles destabilises any simple interpretation of madness in the text.¹⁴

However, while the popularity of *Alice in Wonderland* consolidated the growth of the literary exploration of dream worlds, and 'the climate and the audience for fantasy' in general (Matthews 17), the first example of the dream as a portal through which to access and explore

¹⁴ See Gardner's *Annotated Alice* for explanations of the logic behind Carroll's apparent nonsense. For Prickett, Carroll's nonsense 'is one of undeviating rationality pushed to its furthest and wildest extremes' (131).

a completely-realised secondary world actually occurred seven years earlier in the first novel of Carroll's friend, George MacDonald, through whom an influence on both Kingsley and Carroll's use of the dream might be traced.¹⁵ MacDonald's *Phantastes*, published in 1858, has often earned him the controversial title of the father of modern fantasy because of the consistent way in which his magical world is presented and realised in realistic terms. Where Carroll's secondary world remains humorously dream-like with its inverted logic and light-hearted relevance to Alice's waking life, MacDonald utilises the dream in an entirely different fashion, working instead with the high seriousness of earlier Romantic writers such as Coleridge, Wordsworth and De Quincey to afford his secondary world a spiritual depth and philosophical gravity that distinguish it from Carroll's exploration of dreamspace, and allow it to prefigure the hyperspace philosophies that would soon follow these important literary developments in the spatial imagination.¹⁶ The distinction between these two early works of fantasy is an interrelated one of seriousness and spatial degrees: while Carroll's world seems confined to a mental dreamspace in its lack of supernatural elements – the nonsense and strangeness of the narrative prevent any sense of wonder at the magic behind events – MacDonald treats the dream as a liminal space through which to transition into supernatural space beyond. In characteristically Romantic fashion, the dream is privileged as a higher form of consciousness, allowing access to a space both supernatural and psychological, paradoxically both 'beyond' the natural world and within the subconscious; a space that, also paradoxically, uses the medium of sleep to afford a transcendental spiritual awakening. *Phantastes* is, therefore, the most completely realised literary exploration of Coleridge's dream-as-portal construction, where the dream becomes a liminal pathway between two completely separate worlds. It is when the protagonist moves beyond liminal dream space

¹⁵ Not only personal friends, Prickett notes that Carroll sent his completed *Alice* 'manuscript to MacDonald for advice on publication' (43). Gardner also acknowledges some thematic similarities in their works (15). For a more detailed comparison of their mutual influence upon each other's works, see Docherty's *The Literary Products of the Lewis Carroll-George MacDonald Friendship*.

¹⁶ 'MacDonald was always quick to acknowledge his debt to Coleridge,' and Prickett argues that 'one of the roots of MacDonald's two worlds' was 'undoubtedly' Coleridge's conception of symbol as a duality that 'brought two separate worlds into relationship with each other' ('Two Worlds' 21). George MacDonald discovered the works of the English Romantics 'at about the same time as he discovered the German Romantics' and was particularly influenced by Coleridge's theories of imagination: 'Indeed, *Phantastes*, it might be claimed, is not only a work of the Romantic imagination, but also a work about the Romantic imagination' (Gray 27, 33). See the rest of Gray's chapter for the influence of German Romanticism, and particularly Novalis, on MacDonald. On MacDonald's conceptions of imagination, see his essays 'The Fantastic Imagination' and 'The Imagination: Its Function and its Culture' in *A Dish of Orts* (1893). As well as anticipating modern reader-response theories, Gray suggests that MacDonald's 'The Fantastic Imagination' 'provides many of the key ideas encountered in Tolkien's "On Fairy Stories" and Lewis's various writings on fairy-tales and fantasy: the dislike of allegory, the requirement to abide by the internal laws of the invented fantasy world (the "sub-creation") and the rejection of the idea that fairy-tales are primarily for children' – ideas that evidence MacDonald's essential influential place in the development of modern fantasy (31).

into the supernatural secondary world beyond, and when this world begins to be mapped and charted in realistic terms, that the birth of modern fantasy has truly begun.

To begin with, the tone of MacDonald's *Phantastes* suggests the adult audience MacDonald was writing for, a far cry from the (at least partly) childlike audience of Carroll's text.¹⁷ Engaging closely with the developing trend of Victorian realism, the events of the novel are presented through the view of Anodos, a young Victorian man who happens upon the supernatural secrets of Fairyland quite by accident. The novel draws upon folkloric spatial constructions of the supernatural realm that prefigure the hyperspace philosophies that would soon emerge to posit Fairyland as a space that 'runs parallel' to the natural human world (6.214), intersecting with it in ways that recall the popular phenomenon of Spiritualism that was growing in the popular Victorian imagination at this time:

as the lights and influences of the upper worlds sink silently through the earth's atmosphere; so doth Faerie invade the world of men, and sometimes startle the common eye with an association as of cause and effect, when between the two no connecting links can be traced. (5.198-9)

The evocation of 'upper worlds' that exist beyond the earth's atmosphere, and yet 'sink silently' (invisibly) through it to interact with the natural world in ways inexplicable to 'the common eye' reflects the tradition of supernaturalism and spatial imagination developed in the Gothic, Romantic and earlier Victorian works. Most significantly, the implication is that these supernatural events, and the supernatural realm itself, may be perceived by an alternative perspective to 'the common eye': dreams and mesmeric trance.

Indeed, in keeping with the tradition initiated by Coleridge and developed by Shelley, De Quincey and Dickens across the century, Anodos's transition both into awareness of the supernatural and physically into the supernatural space of Fairyland is occasioned by the altered perception and liminal space of both the dream and mesmeric trance. It employs a host of liminal symbols that indicate both Anodos's spiritual, mental and physical passage into fairyland via thresholds, doors, and dreamspace, and his ritual passage from childhood to manhood (the keys to these doors are given to him upon his twenty-first birthday). Significantly, Anodos's journey is initiated with his discovery of his father's desk, which is

¹⁷ 'Although MacDonald's fairyland...borrows many features from the fairy tale, this far more complex fictional world is essentially a new creation through which its inventor can explore adult themes' (Landow 25). The child audience of Carroll's text is only partial: as Matthews suggests, *Alice* 'enlarged the possibilities of fiction by introducing a kind of children's book that could be fully appreciated only by grown-ups' (17). I would suggest a similar claim for Kingsley's novel.

both a metafictional symbol of text and language (Mendelson 26), and an interwoven collection of secreted doorways and concealed spaces that prefigure Anodos's later transition from his waking world to the secret space of fairyland: 'the door of a little cupboard in the centre especially attracted my interest, as if there lay the secret of this long-hidden world' (5.6). Behind this door is a secret space that seems to operate as a threshold between the natural and supernatural worlds: 'suddenly there stood on the threshold of the little chamber, as though she had just emerged from its depth, a tiny woman-form' – a fairy – with a 'voice that strangely recalled a sensation of twilight' (5.7).

This fairy, accompanied by the liminal symbols of doorways, thresholds and twilight, seems to exhibit mesmeric power over Anodos, who looks 'deeper and deeper' into her eyes 'till they spread around me like seas, and I sank in their waters' (5.11), the sinking and the seas both a common metaphor for trance, sleep and the subconscious, and the seas also an expansive metaphor for the kinds of landscapes that Anodos will be drawn to, and drawn into, in Fairyland. This mesmeric supernatural experience occasions Anodos's transition into Fairyland, which, while dream-like, and continuing the same symbolic use of water, is equally presented as an awakening:

I suddenly, as one awakes to the consciousness that the sea has been moaning by him for hours...became aware of the sound of running water near me; and, looking out of bed, I saw that a large green marble basin...was overflowing like a spring; and that a stream of clear water was running over the carpet...And, stranger still, where this carpet, which I had myself designed to imitate a field of grass and daisies, bordered the course of the little stream, the grass-blades and daisies seemed to wave in a tiny breeze that followed the water's flow; while under the rivulet they bent and swayed with every motion of the changeful current, as if they were about to dissolve with it, and, forsaking their fixed form, become fluent as the waters. (5.13-4)

In like manner does the entire room dissolve into Fairyland, the carved wood designs coming to life as vines and branches, until 'although I dressed in all haste, I found myself completing my toilet under the boughs of a great tree, whose top waved in the golden stream of the sunrise with many interchanging lights, and with shadows of leaf and branch gliding over leaf and branch, as the cool morning wind swung it to and fro, like a sinking sea-wave' and 'the tree under which I seemed to have lain all night' is revealed as 'one of the advanced guard of a dense forest' that forms the edge of Fairyland, and into which Anodos wanders, unquestioningly (5.16).

Kaplan states that ‘the central mesmeric experience is that of sleep-waking,’ in which we paradoxically fall asleep (or move into a trance-state) in order to awaken to a sense of higher reality – one that, most significantly, is likened by ‘the everyday consciousness’ to dreams (217). Rather than a falling asleep ‘into a dream’, as Manlove has suggested (‘Circle’ 59), in a context of cultural and literary mesmerism, Anodos’s journey may be instead a sleep-waking in the same way that the trance-state offered by mesmerism allowed the journeyer to discover ‘other lands’ and new truths. Through dreams, characters ‘can be brought into contact with truths that the rational and waking mind cannot glimpse’ (Kaplan 225). This sense of higher reality, particularly spiritual reality, is emphasised throughout the text and begins in the sleep-waking transition itself, where ‘The flowering of the man-made decorations in the carpet and the carvings immediately suggests that this *other* world, “Fairyland”, is to be in some sense more “real” than the one Anodos is leaving’ (Prickett 179).¹⁸

Indeed, the space of MacDonald’s Fairyland shares properties with both dreams and mesmeric trance-states, as ‘one who travels’ in ‘Fairyland’ ‘takes everything as it comes’ and ‘is surprised at nothing’, in a way that recalls Coleridge’s interest in the lack of volition experienced during dreaming (5.50). Likewise, this space also suggests the kind of mesmeric trance or altered perception required to sense supernatural spirits:

as I went through the wood, I was haunted with the feeling that other shapes, more like my own size and mien, were moving about at a little distance on all sides of me. But as yet I could discern none of them...I constantly imagined, however, that forms were visible in all directions except that to which my gaze was turned; and that they only became invisible, or resolved themselves into other woodland shapes, the moment my looks were directed towards them. (5.52)

‘Haunted’ by ‘this feeling of presence,’ Anodos’s journey through Fairyland thus encompasses both an inward journey through the recesses of his subconscious, and an outward journey through the higher spaces of the supernatural world. Importantly, through its allusions to the trance-states of mesmerism and spiritualism, *Phantastes* suggests that it is within the inner spaces of the subconscious mind that Anodos discovers the liminal states of consciousness required to move, at the same time as his inward journey, paradoxically beyond the space of his mind into supernatural space beyond (5.52).

¹⁸ MacDonald’s son, Greville, reiterates this idea in his Introduction to *Phantastes*, in which he writes that Fairyland is ‘much more real than the vulgar world that will not let us step outside its heavy bars’ (vii).

The water and sea symbolism of Anodos's transition from natural to supernatural, and conscious to subconscious space is continued throughout the text, where it is often combined with liminal symbolism and inversions of nature and supernature:

Then I remembered that night is the fairies' day, and the moon their sun; and I thought—Everything sleeps and dreams now: when the night comes, it will be different...elves and other children of the night...wake when mortals dream, and find their common life in those wondrous hours that flow noiselessly over the moveless death-like forms of men and women and children, lying strewn and parted beneath the weight of the heavy waves of night, which flow on and beat them down, and hold them drowned and senseless, until the ebbtide comes, and the waves sink away, back into the ocean of the dark. (5.20)

A powerful metaphor for the subconscious, these waves also resemble the effects of sleep and dream in their paralyzing weight, recalling the incubus of Coleridgean nightmare. The fairies are creatures of dream space – dreaming is their waking – and likewise, they are related to the ultimate ‘other’ space beyond life – death. The inversions suggest that Anodos has entered a space characterized by dichotomy between his material waking life, and his dreaming, subconscious, death-like space, peopled with mythic and folkloric elements, and in which, paradoxically, he discovers deeper reality and more vibrant life than in his waking Victorian world.¹⁹ As Prickett writes:

In the face of a predominantly empiricist and scientific culture concerned to rationalise and where possible demythologise the long record of man's awareness of the numinous, MacDonald reasserts the value of myth and symbol, not as a primitive relic nor simply as a literary device, but as a vital medium of human consciousness. (‘Two Worlds 19)

Indeed, Anodos's journey through this space is both a physical and a spiritual one that privileges the concept of God in nature, and the restorative, spiritual power of the imagination, and leaves the impression that his transition into this supernatural space was necessary for his spiritual growth.²⁰

While these ideas are important however, most important for the gradual development of secondary-world fantasy is the physical setting that this spiritual journey is placed within, and

¹⁹ This was a spiritual journey through supernatural space that would influence C. S. Lewis, who wrote that “To construct plausible and moving ‘other worlds,’ you must draw on the only ‘other world’ we know, that of the spirit” (cited in Landow 27-8). Like De Quincey, MacDonald was influenced by the dream spaces and extended powers of mind in the writings of Jean Paul, and he employed direct references to several of Jean Paul's works as epigraphs to chapters in his own novels. See Webb's ‘George MacDonald and Jean Paul: An Introduction.’

²⁰ The spiritual, moral and other journeys of Anodos within Fairyland are beyond the specifically spatial scope of this study. However, many excellent studies have illuminated this area: see for example, Prickett and Manlove.

the sense of reality that is attributed to this space. In *Phantastes* the liminal space of the dream explored within the works of the Romantic and early Victorian writers opens out into a fully-realised parallel world – a luscious, intricate and distinctly corporeal setting, laden with woods and vales that ‘stretched as far as the sight could reach on every side of me’ (ch5), streams and seas, towers and libraries, and a focus on topological mapping and magnetic navigation – ‘Through them I directed my way, holding eastward as nearly as I could guess’ (5.60-1) – in an intricate creation of a space that is not the natural world, but bears even more real psychological and emotional impact on Anodos than the Victorian world in which he began. Anodos’s journey through this expansive world takes the form of a series of transitions and crossings from house to woodland to ‘open space’ (5.60), that are populated with a diverse array of supernatural creatures that unlike the naturalized fairies of Kingsley, or the nonsense creatures of Carroll, take on a distinctly supernatural appearance in ‘the other world’, from the flower fairies that apparently form the source of human folklore, to the terrible vampiric and ghostly Ash tree, ‘vague, shadowy, almost transparent’, a ‘spectre’ with a ‘horrible’ ‘face, which throbbed with fluctuating and pulsatory visibility’ and ‘resembled that of a corpse’, with eyes ‘alive, yet not with life’ (5.57-9). As Manlove suggests, Anodos’s ‘feet do not sink very heavily into that soil, but we see him walk through forests and plains, voyage on river and ocean, sojourn in cottages and palaces, until in that world he is killed and laid in the earth’ (‘Scottish Fantasy’ 17).

The question of reality of this supernatural space is also an important question in the book, and MacDonald employs several techniques to move beyond the hesitation engendered within earlier Gothic, Romantic and Victorian explorations of dreams and supernatural space, and instill in his work an implicit belief in the reality of the supernatural phenomena being presented. Along with the physical descriptions of supernatural space, which are among the first in British literature, this high sense of reality – both psychological and physical – attached to the events of the narrative, is one of the most important developments for the modern fantasy genre that would soon emerge fully in the novels of Morris, and in MacDonald’s later work. Importantly, like his forerunners in fantastic fiction, MacDonald engages with the prevailing Victorian discourse of madness in relation to supernaturalism and dreams, and unites it with his central concept of travel through space: at one point in his journey, Anodos ‘could hardly believe that there was a Fairy Land; and that all I had passed through...had not been the wandering dream of a diseased imagination...not merely causing me indeed to travel, but peopling for me with vague phantoms the regions through which my actual steps had led me’ (5.113). The link between the ‘diseased imagination’ of madness, and

vast spatial regions peopled with phantoms is a discourse continued from the Romantics. Significantly, in an important metafictional moment, it is with reference to Fairytales and the act of reading that Anodos's belief in the reality of Fairyland is restored, as he observes a girl reading and suddenly 'believed in Fairyland again' (5.114).

Lastly, in addition to the higher sense of reality attributed to Fairyland in the opening chapter and throughout the text, the reality of Anodos's experience, and thus also Fairyland, is firmly indicated by the final chapter, which details Anodos's return to the natural world. Significantly, rather than merely waking from his dream, as Alice does, after his death in Fairyland, Anodos finds himself on a hilltop of his estate, and is told by his family that he had been missing for twenty-one days, though to him, in characteristic fairylore, 'it seemed twenty-one years' (6.213). This physical disappearance is compounded with the fact that 'On the morning of my disappearance, they had found the floor of my room flooded; and, all that day, a wondrous and nearly impervious mist had hung about the castle and grounds' (6.212-3). Most important, however, is the greater sense of reality that Anodos attributes to the space of Fairyland, and in a way similar to Shelley's *Frankenstein*, he has completed a reversal in which his dream-life seems more real than his waking life, which takes on the characteristics of dreams and becomes his 'new experiences' in contrast to his journeys in Fairyland: 'Nor could I yet feel quite secure in my new experiences. When, at night, I lay down once more in my own bed, I did not feel at all sure that when I awoke, I should not find myself in some mysterious region of Fairy Land. My dreams were incessant and perturbed' (6.213).

However, despite the detailed realism of the prose, and the heavy physical description of the supernatural Fairyland, the fact that Anodos's transportation into this 'beyond' space seems to occur via the liminal space of the dream has allowed some critics to discount it from inclusion within the modern fantasy genre in the same way that they dismiss Carroll's *Alice* books. Lin Carter believes that 'The key element in the imaginary-world romance is that the reader is to assume that the worldscape of the story is *a real place*: that the hero of such a story is in very real danger from the various monsters and magicians he encounters' (x). Because works like *Phantastes* 'are set in Dreamland', 'we are not expected to take their imagined landscapes seriously; over and over MacDonald reiterates that his heroes are wandering through a waking dream': 'Thus, if we accept MacDonald as the founder of the heroic fantasy laid in invented worlds, we would also have to admit *Alice*...to the fold, as well. And, obviously, that would never do' (x). Carter does not go on to explain just why this would never do, though Manlove provides one possible answer:

where the supernatural is seen as a symbolic extension of the purely human mind...the work in which it appears [is not] a fantasy. This is the case in the *Alice* books, where the happenings are presented as Alice's dreams: as Tolkien says, "since the fairy-story deals with 'marvels', it cannot tolerate any frame or machinery suggesting that the whole story in which they occur is a figment or illusion." (*Modern Fantasy* 6)

While Frow's model of genre as a fluid set of characteristics that can appear in different concentrations within texts, previously explored in Chapter One, is a more helpful way of viewing *Alice*'s use of the developing literary fantasy and fantastic conventions, much criticism of modern fantasy explicitly rejects *Alice* from consideration upon the assumption, following Tolkien's arguments in *Tree and Leaf* that the dream framework negates the element of fantasy in the novel, relegating it instead to pure nonsense.

However, the notion that a dream framework 'explains away' an otherwise fully realised and complex spatial world is a simplistic and reductive view that fails to take into account the steady trend of literary, scientific, philosophical and cultural influence over the course of the nineteenth century that privileged the dream as a liminal space between the natural and supernatural worlds, and dream-like trance-states as legitimate means to achieve the higher consciousness necessary to explore higher or 'beyond' supernatural spaces. It fails to account for the level of ambiguity that the dream framework afforded to the reality of the spaces and phenomena that it afforded access to, as well as the level of psychological reality afforded to imagination as a medium through which to access such higher – particularly spiritual – reality.

While Carroll's academic and humorous approach to the fantastic in the *Alice* books suggests a less serious treatment of the supernatural, and so might in some ways justify views that it does not 'belong' to the fantasy genre, the heavy adoption of Victorian realism within MacDonald's text, and its strong connections with both English and German Romanticism serve to challenge such approaches to his work. By locating his writing as part of a wider trajectory of supernatural and dream literature that extends both before and after his fantasies, and which his own works do much to advance, my research challenges the idea that MacDonald's works are 'so obscure and severed in character from those of his contemporaries' (Manlove 'Circle' 56). As has been explored over the previous chapters, MacDonald's text is founded upon the proposition that just because an experience is a dream does not mean that it is not real, either psychologically or physically, and this is a position that situates his text in a traceable trajectory of fantasy writing across the century, from the

Romantic supernatural conception of mind to the later secondary world fantasies that utilize the emergent supernatural and mental hyperspace philosophies. Landow seems to acknowledge such an idea when he states that ‘a great many Victorian and later fantasies employ such dream structure, for the movement into the subjective world of the mind is the first step into fantasy’ (28). As such, any claim that the framing device of the dream discredits the reality of the events that occur within that dream world, becomes problematic. As direct inheritors of both this fantasy and dream-world tradition – the next step in their evolution toward modern fantasy – both *Phantastes* and the *Alice* books partake in the nineteenth-century’s ambiguous approach to dreams and their psychological and spatial reality. In this way, these ‘dream worlds’ bear a much closer resemblance to the ‘secondary worlds’ of modern fantasy than critics have previously allowed.

A further argument for the inclusion of Carroll’s writing in the fantasy genre is that, perhaps surprisingly, it specifically engages with the mounting Victorian challenge to orthodox notions of space that would result in the hyperspace philosophies and their impact upon the literary creation of secondary worlds. A mathematician, Carroll was acutely aware of the developing trends toward non-Euclidean geometry, and perhaps engaged with this in *Alice*. He would most certainly have been aware, by the time *Through the Looking-Glass* (1872) was written, of the development of these theories into early models of hyperspace, and their adoption by the spiritualist imagination as examples of transcendental, spiritual space. Importantly, Carroll’s ‘exploration of mirror images and symmetry in *Through the Looking-Glass*...with their four-dimensional implications, stands as comment on contemporary English fascination with higher dimensions, rather than a sign of his own belief in the idea’ (Henderson 22). While his texts were written too early for the actual philosophies of hyperspace that were developed in the late 1870s and 1880s, Throesch suggests that they were taken up as models of hyperspace in the intellectual and popular climate that followed, and Connor argues that ‘Carroll’s dream-geometries may have helped form the climate in which *Flatland* flourished’ (267). Indeed, for Throesch, ‘That Carroll was concerned with, or at least aware of, the dimensional analogy is further demonstrated by the fact that he owned a first-edition copy of Abbott’s *Flatland*’, a novel that ‘was published after the *Alice* books,’ but which ‘Carroll may have been interested in...because his Flatlanders, being two-dimensional creatures born of the dimensional analogy, are products of the same interpretive impulse that rules the inhabitants of Wonderland and the Looking-Glass World’ (Throesch 43).

The focus on spatial distortion is a recognized feature of *Alice*, but what is less widely-known is that Alice's distortions of shape and size reflect the postulations about the effects of non-Euclidean space on the body, which distorts as it moves through differently curved spaces. Likewise, one of Carroll's most famous symbols of such bodily distortion, Alice's 'shutting up like a telescope' (17), is an interesting way of conceptualising the kinds of folded spaces – the bringing near of the far that a telescope normally achieves, redoubles as the telescope itself folds up so that the expanded space it occupied is contained over and on top of itself within a single space. The telescope metaphor is an interesting one, given the telescope's seemingly magical ability to transcend vast space and bring the far near at the same time as it remains distant: it is a paradoxical concept – through the lens of the telescope, the distant remains at once far away, and immediately near – a double spatial existence. The connections between the telescope and perception, via its optical nature, are even more important in relation to the similar role of dreams and mesmeric trance states as liminal devices that transcend the similar space between the natural and supernatural, bringing the far near.²¹ Finally, the application of this folding up of space to the space of Alice's body itself is interesting, as through the dream space, Alice seems to achieve the kind of coexisting, layered, interwoven spaces associated with higher dimensions.

This focus on distorted, layered, interwoven space is an even more central part of *Through the Looking-Glass*, which appeared 'just at the moment when awareness of non-Euclidean geometry was stirring in England' (Connor 267), and which takes as its mode of entry into 'the other world' not the liminal space of the dream but the distorting, space-altering properties of a mirror, through which Alice passes into the inverted space of Looking-glass world beyond.²² Alice's journey into this world is first occasioned by her curiosity and her difficulty in imagining what such an inverted, distorted space would look like. As she steps through the liminal plane of the mirror, she finds that it is a space in which to move forwards one must move backwards, to observe objects one must look away from them, and the faster one runs the more they remain in the same place. The world, 'if this *is* the world at all,' says Alice (163), is described with physical reality: an expansive network of fields and woods,

²¹ See Luckhurst's *The Invention of Telepathy* for the ways in which this spatial folding was encoded within practices of telepathy, thought-transference and other late-Victorian occult and psychic phenomena (practices that Carroll himself was deeply interested in). See also Thurschwell's *Literature, Technology and Magical Thinking* for the ways that such occult spatial folding was also sensed within technological advancements such as the railway and the telephone.

²² The idea may have sprung from MacDonald's *Phantastes*, in which he writes, 'What a strange thing a mirror is! And what a wondrous affinity exists between it and a man's imagination! For this room of mine, as I behold it in the glass is the same and yet not the same...I should like to live in that room if only I could get into it' (5.210-12). See Shaberman and Docherty on the influence of MacDonald on Carroll.

divided by brooks and hedges, that resembles a giant chess board. A more corporeal landscape than that of *Alice*, its elements take on magical properties, such as the wood ‘where things have no names’ (176), which causes Alice to forget the names of objects, creatures and even herself as she journeys through it. Gardner suggests that this wood represents the universe itself, which exists separately from the human attempt to define and make sense of it with signs and symbols (178) – a theme that finds persistent representation in Carroll’s wordplay and the strange elements of Wonderland and Looking-glass world that Alice finds difficult to attach arbitrary meaning to. Indeed, as Throesch suggests, ‘the fantastic spaces of Wonderland and the Looking-Glass World, like the fourth dimension of space, are simulacra that owe their origin to the inversion of signified and signifier’ so that ‘the bizarre linguistic logic of the inhabitants of the *Alice* books can be read as a critique of the new mathematics and the rationale that supports its quirky offspring, hyperspace philosophy’ (Throesch 39).

Importantly, the construction of the Looking-Glass world as a kind of higher-dimensional space allows Carroll to relate it to the developing appropriations of such spaces to explain supernatural phenomena. According to Gardener, ‘Carroll was interested in psychic phenomena and automatic writing’ (xv), a fact that casts interesting light on the scene in *Looking-Glass* when the White King is dumbfounded by his pencil that is writing as if with a will of its own, apparently unable to see that it is really Alice holding it (Carroll 147). ‘Automatic writing, as it was called, was a major aspect of the spiritualist craze in the nineteenth century. A disembodied spirit was believed to seize the hand of a psychic...and produce messages from the Great Beyond’ (Gardner 147). The fact that Alice that has emerged from the ‘great beyond’ – the other side of the mirror, makes her a ghostly figure that echoes the spiritualist application of higher dimensions to explain automatic writing and similar psychic phenomena. It is an association of Alice and her dreamworlds with supernatural haunting that Carroll would continue in the closing poem to *Looking-Glass*, in which he writes:

Still she haunts me, phantomwise,
Alice moving under skies
Never seen by waking eyes. (273)

Indeed, the discourse of the dream and its ability to destabilise fundamental notions of reality, space and existence has not disappeared altogether. While Alice’s initial dream of Wonderland is familiar, in *Looking-Glass*, the Red King now dreams of her, and Tweedledee asks:

‘if he left off dreaming about you, where do you suppose you’d be?’
 ‘Where I am now, of course,’ said Alice.
 ‘Not you!’ Tweedledee retorted contemptuously. ‘You’d be nowhere. Why you’re only a sort of thing in his dream!’
 ‘If that there King was to wake,’ added Tweedledum, ‘you’d go out – bang! – just like a candle!... You know very well you’re not real.’ (189)

This inversion masterfully destabilises the base assumptions upon which prevailing laws of nature and reality were established. Alice, as the protagonist and our common referent in the natural world, through which we experience the strangeness of the inverted space behind the looking-glass, has now become a figment of someone’s imagination, and thus has been charged with only existing in space while the dream continues. In a neat inversion of our expectations of reality, the Red King and his world only exist while Alice dreams of them, and yet, within this dream space, Alice herself is only a figment of the Red King’s dream, and thus her experience of space and reality are confined to the world of his dream. The question for the reader becomes one of spatial reference – is Alice perceiving the Red King in the space of her own dream, which is itself an imaginary space within the space of her everyday world, or is she currently walking through the space of the Red King’s dream, and thus existing within the space of another consciousness? If dream worlds are not real – is it Alice or the Red King that bear reality in the natural world? Beyond this, is the natural world merely a version of someone’s dream-space?²³ The implications for further extending and enfolding the various layers of dream space and experience here is never-ending – a chaotic, ever-repeating fractal, much like the earlier Gothic constructions of space examined in Chapter Three, and Carroll perpetuates this confusion to the end of the story, in which the question of whose dream it really was is left as the final question of the book (Gardner 271), as the Red King continues to sleep and Carroll asks, ‘Life, what is it but a dream?’ (273).

FANTASTIC HYPERSPACE IN MACDONALD’S *LILITH*

As discussed above and in Chapter One, the 1880s saw a marked rise in public, scientific and spiritual interest in higher-dimensional space. In the years following *Looking-Glass*’s publication, the mathematical ideas that Carroll had engaged with were developed into

²³ Prickett suggests this interesting configuration may relate to theological notions that the material world only exists in the mind of God, a notion that finds a parallel in Hindu mythology (*Victorian Fantasy* 141).

philosophies of the fourth dimension – a concept that was itself adopted by the spiritualists, and amalgamated with the spiritual realm. The sense that supernatural space could now be charted and mapped via concepts of higher-dimensional space and their psychological correlations had a profound effect on literature. Where authors from Coleridge to Kingsley had utilized the space of the dream to access the supernatural world, the literary adoption of mathematical and spiritual hyperspace philosophies led directly to the invention of the kinds of secondary worlds associated with the modern fantasy genre. This literary evolution from the dream worlds of fairyland to supernatural higher dimensions is best illustrated by the differences between the dream-like Fairyland setting of George MacDonald's *Phantastes* in 1858, and the spatial organization within his 1895 novel *Lilith*, which was originally subtitled 'A Tale of the Seventh Dimension', and in which he explicitly engages with the popular concept of higher-dimensional space to create, arguably, one of literature's first secondary worlds. According to Bilbro, 'MacDonald's use of dimensions...has remained underappreciated' (11). A closer look at the way MacDonald engages with the literary tradition that extends from dream space to hyperspace helps to situate his work within the deeper intellectual contexts of his era, and illustrate the fact that his fiction formed a crucial step in the evolution of the modern fantasy genre.

Unlike the earlier dreamlike transition of *Phantastes*, in an intertextual reference to Carroll's *Looking-Glass*, a mirror is the liminal medium through which Vane passes into 'the region of the seven dimensions' (17) – a space that, as Greville MacDonald notes, correlates with 'the much debated *fourth dimension* – that concept of existence which, which, being spiritual, is not indeed independent of the concrete, but contains and controls the concrete three dimensions in creative manifestation' (549). After an 'upward' journey through a winding and climbing series of liminal thresholds – doorways, passageways, stairs – Vane discovers the mirror, only to observe 'that it reflected neither the chamber nor my own person.' On moving closer, he stumbles over 'the frame of the mirror' and finds himself in 'a wild country, broken and heathy' (6). A fully-realised geographical landscape, it is nevertheless overlaid upon the natural world. The Raven informs Vane that, 'you have not yet left your house, neither has your house left you. At the same time it cannot contain you, or you inhabit it!': 'That tree stands on the hearth of your kitchen, and grows nearly straight up its chimney' (17). This world is 'so much another that most of its physical, and many of its mental laws are different

from those of this world. As for moral laws, they must everywhere be fundamentally the same' (38).²⁴

The importance of the space of the mind and its relationship of overlap with the supernatural realm is suggested by Vane's reference to the central 'garret spaces' in which he discovers the mirror as 'The brooding brain of the building...full of mysterious dwellers' (11). These 'mysterious dwellers' of higher dimensions are associated by the household staff with ghosts and supernatural beings, in accordance with the spiritualist interpretations of hyperspace. Indeed, Vane's discovery of 'the region of the seven dimensions' is first occasioned when he investigates the ghostly 'apparition' of Mr. Raven, who appears and disappears within the house: 'There were some who believed he was not dead; but both he and the old woman held it easier to believe that a dead man might revisit the world he had left, than that one who went on living for hundreds of years should be a man at all' (4). Likewise, the land of seven dimensions itself is associated with the supernatural realm of the afterlife. When Vane enters it, he asks, 'Could it be that I was dead...and did not know it? Was I in what we used to call the world beyond the grave?' (10). It is an association of hyperspace with the supernatural afterlife that is repeated throughout the narrative in characteristic liminal symbolism: on a wide heath, Vane 'stood in the burial-ground of the universe; its compass the unenclosed heath, its wall the gray horizon, low and starless!', where he is 'assailed by a cold that seemed almost a material presence, and I struggled across the threshold as if from the clutches of an icy death' (24-5).

The strangeness of this world is related to both the supernatural and dreams in Vane's reference to madness, as he exclaims upon entering it, 'The terror that madness might be at hand laid hold upon me: must I henceforth place no confidence either in my senses or my consciousness?' (7). Though the solidity of the material landscape in this space convinces him that it must bear relationship with reality, it is an experience of hyperspace that, in line with nineteenth-century discourses of both hyperspace and sublimity, Vane finds hard to capture in language. As Bilbro notes, this is a theme that also occurred in Abbott's influential *Flatland*: 'For both Abbott and MacDonald, higher-dimensional regions are so disconcerting and unintelligible to lower-dimensional beings that words cannot convey their reality' (7). Significantly, this unintelligibility of higher-dimensional space is related, by Vane, to dreams:

²⁴ See Prickett's *Victorian Fantasy* for discussion of MacDonald's moral laws (particularly 182). See also the discussion of spirituality below, which explains why moral laws must remain 'fundamentally the same' across all dimensions.

in his inability to articulate his higher-dimensional experience in human language, he feels 'like one in process of awaking from a dream, with the thing that seemed familiar gradually yet swiftly changing through a succession of forms until its very nature is no longer recognisable' (8). Mendelson suggests that the land of seven dimensions is, for Vane, 'a region that is the architectural equivalent of his own undiscovered consciousness' (29), while Manlove argues that like *Phantastes*, *Lilith* is 'dream-structured': both 'consist of a sequence of often inexplicable but suggestive images, described with a curious mixture of precision and vagueness; and the landscape is that of both the unconscious mind and the world imaginatively seen' ('Circle' 57). This inexplicability and incommunicability indicates the sublimity of this numinous space, and mirrors De Quincey's similar problem when faced with the sublime and vast spaces of his dreams, as well as Frankenstein's inability to describe the sublime and supernatural creature. Such thematic resonance represents the evolution that these higher spaces have taken from supernatural dream space to dream-like hyperspace.

Yet this association of the higher-dimensional world with dreaming space is not as simple as it first seems. Manlove notes that the mirror through which Vane enters the land of seven dimensions is 'a symbol of the intellect, the conscious self, and is thus quite opposite in character to the gateway to Fairy Land in *Phantastes*. Unlike Anodos, Vane enters the strange realm of his story in a wakeful, questioning state' ('Circle' 64). However, in an inversion that recalls the similar cases of *Phantastes* and *Frankenstein*, 'At the beginning of *Lilith* it is clear that this world is the normal and "real" one' and 'the other world is dream-like, with odd transitions of space and juxtapositions', but over the course of the narrative, 'the other world assumes a greater and greater reality, and this world is experienced more and more as the dream' (Prickett *Victorian Fantasy* 192). Near the end of *Lilith*, Mr Vane accepts Mr Raven's offer of death, after which he is inundated with a rapid succession of dream-images, much like the early-nineteenth-century phantasmagoria. In a rather De Quincean dream-fugue, Vane has no conception of time as he moves from dream image to dream image:

For centuries I dreamed – or was it chiliads? or only one long night? – But why ask? for time had nothing to do with me; I was in the land of thought – farther in, higher up than the seven dimensions, the ten senses: I think I was where I am – in the heart of God. – I dreamed away dim cycles in the centre of a melting glacier, the spectral moon drawing nearer and nearer. (230)

These De Quincean dreams destabilise Vane's distinction between the waking and dreaming worlds, as he can never be sure where he is merely dreaming of the natural world.

Indeed, Vane goes through several spatial transitions between the dimensions when he believes he goes from sleeping to waking, yet the difficult question of whether he is truly awake or still dreaming problematises his sense of reality: ‘Can it be that that last waking was also in the dream? That I am still in the chamber of death, asleep and dreaming, not yet ripe enough to wake?’ (250). At the end of *Lilith*, it is not clear if Vane ‘has at last “awoken” from death in that other world, only to be returned to this, or if he has merely dreamed that he has awoken – so that his existence in this world is only part of the dream until he finally “awakes”’ (Prickett *Victorian Fantasy* 192). This inability to distinguish between the dreaming and waking worlds recalls Carroll’s similarly destabilising constructions in *Looking-Glass*. Importantly, it is through this ambiguous representation of dreaming space and the ‘real’ world that ‘What began as two very separate worlds, though co-existing in the same space, have now combined in a single unity very similar to Kingsley’s single inconsistent universe’ (Prickett *Victorian Fantasy* 192).

This diminishing of the boundaries between the spaces of life and death, waking and dreaming, natural and supernatural may be explained by the fact that for MacDonald:

the boundaries between the two worlds...are fundamentally artificial. The distinction between the self and the spirit, body and mind, inside and outside, intellect and imagination – these dualisms are constructs, something we invent. In *Lilith*’s geography, dualisms cohabit the same space, so Vane can cross over into the otherworld using various means because the boundary between the two is imaginary (as opposed to imaginative). (Mendelson 32)

This boundary blurring is important because if ‘the boundary is a construct, then we can routinely pass into an imaginative state that allows us to see differently, to extend our vision’ (Mendelson 32). As Harris notes, ‘MacDonald attempts to unify this secondary world behind the mirror with the everyday surroundings of Vane by presenting the supernatural realm as the spiritual reality underlying the physical world’ (89). ‘The true state of all human beings’ for MacDonald is that they are ‘surrounded by a “solid mass” of reality which will be revealed in the end as illusion. In the MacDonald worldview, it is this world that is liminal: it is a doorstep, on the other side of which lies the great ascent’ (Shippey 20).²⁵

²⁵ ‘MacDonald’s “heretical” religion, with its concept of a “spiritual evolution,” inevitable for all men, draws upon the Victorian fascination with Darwin and the idea of progress, as well as German Romanticism, and fixes him firmly in that era’s intellectual context, while his apparent use of a compartmented psyche anticipated the apparatus of Freud’ (Collins 7-8).

This spiritualising of the natural world via recourse to hyperspace philosophies reflects ideas that were circulating at MacDonald's time of writing. Bilbro convincingly argues that MacDonald likely modelled his dimensional construction on Abbott's *Flatland*, and suggests that both writers 'forged a new way of imagining higher dimensions as *mental* and *spiritual* directions' (my emphasis, 11). The connection with Abbott's popular text is important because, as Rucker suggests, beyond the satirical and scientific levels of meaning in *Flatland*, 'the deepest level' involves an analogy of spiritual experience, as 'A Square's trip into higher dimensions is a perfect metaphor of the mystic's experience of higher reality' (12). This notion is supported by the fact that the concept of hyperspace itself was adopted to explain the kinds of higher spiritual planes imagined by spiritualists, mesmerists and mystics in the late nineteenth century. In 1888 Schofield argued that 'we are everywhere surrounded by another world, which is our final goal': 'far from these spiritual regions occupying some small corner of the material universe, as surely as the greater includes the less, so surely is the universe, vast as it is, swallowed up in the spiritual,' which constitutes 'a fourth dimension' (82, 86, 81). More importantly, like MacDonald, Schofield suggests that the key to accessing hyperspace is via spiritual intuition: 'there is a part of us that has been made in the likeness of God, a part breathed into us by the Divine breath, through which we instinctively perceive the higher sphere' (79).

For Vane, this ultimate goal of spiritual awakening is the answer to his initially troubling attempts to distinguish between his material world and the supernatural higher-dimensional space that encompasses it. He decides that 'when most awake I am only dreaming the more! But when I wake at last into that life which, as a mother her child, carries this life in its bosom. I shall know that I wake, and shall doubt no more' (251). As well as a theological perspective of the greater spiritual life after death, which inverts traditional distinctions between waking and dreaming to posit the material world as dream-like in its illusory qualities, and the spiritual afterlife – the land of thought' and 'the heart of God' – as the ultimate awakening, this metaphor also carries its related spatial component of the three-dimensional human world contained within the higher spatial dimensions that were becoming increasingly associated with the divine realms, and which required only an altered state of consciousness – a spiritual intuition – to perceive.²⁶

²⁶ C. S. Lewis openly acknowledged his heavy influence by MacDonald, especially as a Christian writer, and we may take it as no coincidence that Lewis's later use of higher dimensions in his mid-twentieth-century fantasies echoes MacDonald's nineteenth-century creations. In addition, according to Neuhouser, Lewis also 'read and enjoyed *Flatland* by Edwin A. Abbott', which only serves to reinforce the importance of the literary connection

MacDonald's merging of the material and spiritual worlds in *Lilith* represents a crucial step in the evolution of the fantasy genre. By overlaying these primary and secondary worlds so that they essentially become the same space – a magical space in which the boundaries between natural and supernatural, waking and dreaming, are imaginary constructs – MacDonald's *Lilith*, one could argue, actually indulges in a single supernatural space, and therefore bears a much closer relationship with the secondary-world fantasies that William Morris was writing at the same time, and which mark the clear establishment of the modern fantasy genre. Moreover, while this boundary blurring exists on a spiritual level, the spatial organisation of the worlds specifically in terms of hyperspace philosophy, with its emphasis on liminal, overlapping and integrated space, distances *Lilith* from previous fantasies in which there is a clear and maintained distinction between the everyday world and the alternative, supernatural world, and advances it instead towards the later secondary world fantasies that would be developed by Morris, in which there exists a single material world in which the supernatural is natural. As Collins points out, the magic in *Lilith* is not limited to the alternative dimensions, but, by means of liminal portals, occurs in the primary world as well (9), a fact that, he argues, distinguishes it from Farah Mendlesohn's description of 'portal fantasies,' in which 'the fantastic is *on the other side* and does not "leak."' Although individuals may cross both ways, the magic does not' (Mendlesohn xix). As Collins notes:

the intimate relationship between parallel worlds in *Lilith* ensures that Mr. Vane's library is several times the scene of alternate world "magic," as Mr. Raven plucks forth, whole, the mutilated "half book" stuck to the masked door of the closet, and reads from it to the bedraggled cat that is Lilith, before her several transformations into leopardess and woman there in the library. Her ancient manuscript, we are told, half resides in the alternate universe until such time as Mr. Raven plucks it forth, either into Mr. Vane's space or Mr. Raven's alternate world. (9)

This interweaving of the natural and supernatural worlds creates a single higher-dimensional, and thus, in MacDonald's worldview, a single supernatural world. As Prickett suggests, like the liminal books and ancient manuscripts, as Vane journeys through hyperspace, his 'task is not to inhabit one world or the other, but rather constantly straddle the two and to insist (despite appearances) on their ultimate congruity' (*Victorian Fantasy* 202).

In a similar way, MacDonald's text itself, like the books in Vane's library that seem as if 'another world were about to break through' (251), becomes a liminal portal through which to access the reflective distance of a marvellous secondary world – a world from which the

between nineteenth-century ideas of hyperspace and the development of modern secondary world fantasy in both its nineteenth-century inventors and its twentieth-century inheritors ('Lewis' 24).

reader can mimic the journey of Vane and see the primary world anew. As Mendelson suggests, '*Lilith* is a romance of textuality' (36): 'when the reader is able to approach books as doors into another world...the possibility opens that he will understand his own world better' (35) – even and especially if this world is one characterised by overlap with higher-dimensional supernatural space, and the possibility of the 'other worlds' that MacDonald's text helped to consolidate as an accepted feature of imaginative literature. It is through this construction of an imaginative secondary world, and the reflective distance that it provides its readers, that *Lilith* heralds the emergence of the modern fantasy genre – an intellectual and aesthetic development that would be consolidated that same year in the first secondary world fantasies of William Morris.

MORRIS'S SECONDARY WORLDS: THE BIRTH OF MODERN FANTASY

In 1895, the same year that MacDonald published *Lilith*, William Morris published his 'first great fantasy, *The Wood Beyond the World*' (Lin Carter x). While his earlier fictions had indulged in fantastic elements and shown the same emphasis on the physical landscape that would characterise his later novels, and even, like the other writers of the Victorian fantastic, made particular use of dreams,²⁷ *The Wood Beyond the World* is the first example of a text set in a world completely distinct from the every day world of the reader – a space, often, in which the supernatural is natural. As Matthews suggests, 'By creating a fully consistent and coherent fantasy reality,' Morris 'in effect provides a parallel world, a world of correspondences in a medieval sense but one where potential and possibility are unleashed – a world no longer constrained by the actual, where imagination can shape alternative ideals' (52). It is this quality that allows critics such as Manlove, Lin Carter, and Talbot to label Morris 'the greatest and crucial inventor of secondary-world fantasy' (Talbot 3), and which bore the strongest influence upon seminal writers in the modern fantasy genre, such as Tolkien and Lewis.²⁸

²⁷ In 1856, MacDonald wrote that 'My work is the embodiment of dreams in one form or another' (cited in Manlove 'Writing Fantasy' 62).

²⁸ *The Wood Beyond the World* alone bears distinct hints of the influence Morris would have on the fantasies of both Tolkien and Lewis. For example, Walter's journey through the 'stony waste' land as he attempts to survive on the odd coney or hare, and his affront later at the dwarf who rails against Walter's desire to eat the flesh cooked (51) prefigure Frodo and Sam's similar journey through the wastelands of Tolkien's Mordor, with their similarly odd and raw-flesh-eating guide Gollum. Likewise, the notion of travelling through an enchanted land that is presided over by a beautiful and yet terrible woman with magic powers, who is attended, similarly, by a dwarf – a world in which the very land itself may spy on this woman's enemies – recalls the similar basic

Importantly, Lin Carter has claimed that ‘No one...has ever tried to explain just why Morris began making up the worlds in which he set his tales’ (xi). It is partly this view of a ‘sudden’ literary development that my study has aimed to challenge in its charting of the Victorian spatial imagination, from its Gothic and Romantic origins, to its culmination in the discourses of hyperspace and supernatural worlds. Over the course of writing exemplified by Dickens, Kingsley, Carroll and MacDonald, these literary models of hyperspace and supernatural space were explored in increasing detail, as they participated in, and produced ‘The heightened concern with the shape of space’ that characterised the era in which Morris’s ‘invention’ emerges. In this way, Morris’s focus on the physical detail of his other worlds can be seen as a natural recourse in a trajectory of literary approaches to the supernatural, the imagination and fiction over the course of the nineteenth century.

As Talbot suggests, ‘A critic mis-recording the facts of Morris’s invented worlds can easily make the whole creation sound like an arbitrary and cerebral construction, but to do so is to mislead at a fundamental level.’ Rather, ‘He is master of the mental mapping of a quest and the distances and difficulties that define it (4). ‘In a secondary-world fantasy the physical ecology of the story *is* the story, just as much as the characters who fulfil its sentient roles (and of course any part of nature may be sentient too)’ (5). This emphasis on the material reality of the secondary world is first explored in *The Wood Beyond the World*, in which Morris places such a heavy focus on the corporeal detail of landscape that in many places it outweighs the comparatively sparse descriptions of the protagonist’s thoughts. From the initial sea storm that throws Walter off course and thus onto his journey’s path, the landscape is constructed as a sublime and unknowable force of nature that recalls the earlier conceptions of vast, supernatural space from the Gothic novels onward.

This sense of incomprehensibility in the face of vast space, like that central to the works of De Quincey and MacDonald, is linguistically present within Morris’s descriptions of the landscapes themselves, which are often focalised so heavily through the protagonist that the reader is left with a profound sense of vast space existing outside the limited range of the protagonist’s view as it gazes across the scene. The first distinct occurrence of this dual linguistic and descriptive technique in *The Wood Beyond the World* occurs when, after emerging from the cramped space below deck on the ship, Walter observed that:

construction of Narnia and the White Witch in Lewis’s *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* – a text that also, significantly, draws heavily on MacDonald’s hyperspatial constructions in *Phantastes* and especially *Lilith*.

the sea was dark and tumbling mountain-high, and the white-horses were running down the valleys thereof, and the clouds drave low over all, and bore a scud of rain along with them; and though there was but a rag of sail on her, the ship flew before the wind, rolling a great wash of water from bulwark to bulwark. (23)

Highly descriptive, this entire passage is one extended sentence, and its individual parts, expressed in clear, efficient prose, give the effect of rolling and tumbling over one another like the waves they describe.

Likewise, Walter's adventure is one mapped through vast and sublime spaces of great beauty and great inhospitableness, laced with supernatural creatures and magic. Unlike the protagonists of Dickens, Carroll and MacDonald, Walter's first encounter with the idea of magic while hearing about the 'mistress' who is 'wise in wizardry' (68) is not one of surprise or disbelief, but steady indifference: magic is a fact of this land, though Walter himself has no powers of wizardry, 'for of wizardry he knew nought' (68). The narrative is propelled not by detailed accounts of Walter's inner thoughts, but by the changing landscape, which is described in cartographer's detail, and by sensory perceptions that locate him firmly within this landscape, and which maintain a strong sense of controlled focalisation to emphasize the vastness of this space:

So on he went, and presently was mounting the ridge aforesaid, and, as oft happens when one climbs a steep place, he kept his eyes on the ground, till he felt he was on the top of the ridge. Then he stopped to take a breath, and raised his head and looked, and lo! he was verily on the brow of the great mountain-neck, and down below him was the hanging of the great hill-slopes, which fell down, not slowly, as those he had been those days a-mounting, but speedily enough, though with little of broken places or sheer cliffs. But beyond this last of the desert there was before him a lovely land of wooded hills, green plains, and little valleys, stretching out far and wide, till it ended at last in great blue mountains and white snowy peaks beyond them. (49-50)

Of Morris's style, C. S. Lewis wrote:

It is indeed, this matter-of-factness...which lends to all of Morris's stories their somber air of conviction. Other stories have only scenery; his have geography. He is not concerned with 'painting' landscapes; he tells you the lie of the land, and then you paint the landscapes for yourself. To a reader long fed on the almost botanical and entomological niceties of much modern fiction...the effect is at first very pale and cold, but also fresh and spacious. No mountains in literature are as far away as distant mountains in Morris. The world of his imagining is as windy, as tangible, as resonant and three dimensional, as that of Scott and Homer. (221)

While Morris moves beyond earlier writers in his pronounced focus on mapping the physical landscape of his invented worlds, the greatest difference in his later fiction lies in the absence of any mediation between the primary world of the reader and the imagined secondary world. In the absence of a dream, a mirror, or similar portal device, Morris utilised the power of language itself to transport not the protagonist, who remains firmly embedded in the enclosed secondary world, but the reader into this imaginative space. Morris ‘understood that language is intrinsic to every social culture, so that one world can never be adequately conveyed by the diction of another. His solution was to forge a new form, foreign yet understandable,’ – a ‘specially created language, which combines a relatively simple syntax with a strange archaic vocabulary’ – and which pulls the reader out of the contemporary world’ (Thompson 177). For Matthews, Morris ‘writes with a consciously crafted, elevated style, using language wrenched and reworked into an artificial beauty all its own, as distinct from prosaic speech as fantasy is from mundane reality’ (41), while Landow suggests that Morris ‘employs a peculiar invented language and geography – a technique adopted by many subsequent authors – to insulate us from our world and its prosaic expectations’ (26-7). Indeed, while the language has been thought a downfall of the novels, preventing the reader’s experience of the narrative’s world and complexities, this use of distinct language for the secondary worlds, rather, aids in the sense of a place distinctly separate from the everyday world of the reader – an alien world characterised by its own linguistic and literary style. Importantly, the sense this slightly resistant language gives mimics that of the landscapes it describes, manifesting a strangeness and an awesome power – a sublimity – that exists just slightly beyond human comprehension. Such a transportive device has the effect not of linking the primary to the secondary world, but of emphasising the remote ‘otherness’ of the invented world.²⁹

Through such linguistic and conceptual approaches to his imaginative fiction, which he would consolidate in his later novels (most notably his ‘masterpiece’, *The Well at the World’s End* [Lin Carter ix]) – Morris engaged with an established tradition of the literary fantastic and its relationship with the developing intellectual interest in dreams, the supernatural, and hyperspace, explored throughout the preceding chapters, to at last move beyond the limits of the natural world into supernatural space proper. Far from a spontaneous and isolated invention, Morris’s creation of secondary worlds must be viewed in its literary and cultural context as the inevitable step of a developing genre of literature that privileged the space of

²⁹ Importantly, however, ‘far from being escapist,’ Morris’s ‘fiction takes us temporarily away from the ordinary and familiar in order to draw attention to fresh possibilities in the real world’, and it is this quality of fantasy literature that Morris found most congenial to his political and aesthetic agenda (Matthews 49).

other worlds, and its imaginative exploration. With this final step, following off the back of literary developments from Walpole to MacDonald, ‘Morris brought to fantasy a rich visual, philosophical, poetical, philological, and revolutionary sensibility that enlarged the concept of fiction to shape a new genre.’ ‘As the nineteenth century drew to a close, fantasy was attracting international attention from authors and readers alike,’ and in this climate – bolstered by the continued interest in spiritualism and hyperspace that continued into the mid-twentieth century – Morris’s ‘books found a readership that refused to let them be forgotten. Gradually they helped create a path for a new type of literature as the trail blazed ahead in the works of H. Rider Haggard, W. H. Hudson, Lord Dunsany, David Lindsay, James Branch Cabell, Charles Williams, and J. R. R. Tolkien’ (Matthews 44, 19, 53).

In conclusion, from the ghostly intrusions of Walpole’s Gothic, through the supernatural Somnial Spaces of Coleridge, De Quincey, Shelley, Dickens and Kingsley, in the more distinctly realised hyperspatial worlds of Carroll and MacDonald, and lastly, through the emergence of Morris’s secondary worlds, the nineteenth century witnessed a distinct evolution from the literary fantastic to the modern fantasy genre. As explored over the preceding chapters, it is this sustained and inquisitive intellectual, scientific, philosophical and literary interest in hyperspace – the spaces of dreams, the supernatural and higher dimensions – to which the modern fantasy genre owes its genesis.

CONCLUSION

While classifications of the modern fantasy genre in terms of a distinct secondary world are fairly common within literary criticism, which often traces the genre's origin to the later works of William Morris, less acknowledged is the distinct line of influence that effected this literary development. This line of influence extends back to what we can call 'the Gothic aesthetic' in the eighteenth century, when the supernatural began to be imagined in ways that parallel late-nineteenth-century concepts of hyperspace. Through historicised literary analysis that places a conceptual focus on representations of space and liminality, this thesis has sought to extend current work on the literary fantasy genre, and locate its emergence in the late nineteenth century as part of a wider trajectory of influence across the century that saw the Victorians explore the boundaries of their existence. In particular, it has sought to demonstrate, through the close relationships and networks of influence between the writers discussed, as well as their marked engagement with their philosophical and scientific contexts, that the literary deployment of the concept of hyperspace, even before it was theorised in the late nineteenth century, was fundamental to the development of the modern fantasy genre.

The application of hyperspace philosophies and the related 'spatial imagination' to the evolution of the modern fantasy genre is a new approach that engages with increasing new research into the distinct conceptual areas of space, liminality, dreams and the mind as they were deployed in literature, science and culture across the nineteenth century. In unifying these critical fields, my thesis adopts an interdisciplinary approach that represents the increasing merger of the traditionally separate discourses of science and literature. Moreover, it indicates that these discourses were themselves bound up in an intricate and cross-disciplinary investigation into the nature of space, dreams, and the mind that extended from the Gothic aesthetic in the late eighteenth century to the emergence of hyperspace in the late nineteenth. While much fantasy criticism acknowledges the importance of the Gothic as a precursor to the fantasies that appeared a century later, an approach such as this thesis develops, which traces the literary, philosophical and scientific influences of Gothic concepts of supernatural space opens up new lines of inquiry into this rich conceptual field. More generally, this new approach emphasizes the cultural importance, critical versatility, and wide applications of space and hyperspace as theoretical and critical concepts within literary, cultural, and historical studies. Its illumination of the centrality of the issue of space for the

Victorians, and the ways that this impacted upon literary and scientific approaches to dreams and the supernatural, indicates the rich seams of inquiry that might be opened up into other ways in which the Victorians engaged with and imagined space and hyperspace.

Further, as well as locating the work of diverse writers as part of this wider philosophical trend that embraced a significant portion of the Victorian imagination, this thesis illuminates new ways of thinking about the manner in which space, dreams and the supernatural were utilised within each author's work, as well as within the wider context of Gothic, Romantic and Victorian fiction. Through focusing on popular fantastic writers, as well as authors not traditionally associated with the fantasy genre, such as De Quincey, this thesis widens the scope for research into the ways in which Romantic and Victorian writers engaged with concepts of dreams, the supernatural and space. In many cases, this spatial approach to the representation of the supernatural world and its relationship to dreams offers insight into what have hitherto been seen as discrepancies within some of these texts, and explains them instead as part of a wider contextual approach to concepts of dreams and supernatural space that embraced the interrelated fields of science, philosophy, spiritualism and popular culture.

The result of this new approach is a conception of the close relationship between literature and science in the nineteenth century that challenges the popular notion that fantasy literature was developed purely as a response to increasing industrialisation, the decline of religion, or the perceived dominance of realist modes of writing. What it suggests, in addition, is that modern fantasy was developed as a legitimate and philosophical mode through which to hypothetically explore the kinds of mental and supernatural spaces that were being investigated within popular and scientific culture during the nineteenth century. Still further, while this thesis charts the impact of the spatial imagination upon the formation of the modern fantasy genre, it also suggests the philosophical implications of the reverse impact, and suggests that the literary deployment of hyperspace constructions influenced both the supernatural investigation of the spiritualists over the century, and the development of hyperspace philosophies themselves. As the first and final chapters explore, fantastic literature was instrumental in disseminating and popularising philosophies of hyperspace after their mathematical postulations were developed.

Moreover, this line of influence itself, from the Gothic aesthetic to secondary worlds, encompasses several innovative conceptual approaches to literature and science in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Beginning with a historical analysis of the rise of interest

in the supernatural during the late eighteenth century, the first two chapters sought to illuminate the ways in which the supernatural was imagined, via recourse to mythology, folklore and medieval literature, as an 'other world' that existed paradoxically within and beyond the natural world, and as such, distinctly prefigured later theories of hyperspace. In addition, these chapters traced the ways that Gothic theatre and novels sought to explore liminal points of communication between the natural and supernatural worlds, and in so doing, established a new kind of literature that catered to the rapidly growing popular taste for the supernatural.

Picking up directly from this literary development, the following chapter traced the ways in which the Romantic poets, and Coleridge in particular, drew on the popular Gothic aesthetic, and engaged with Romantic science and psychology to posit dreams as a liminal space between the natural and supernatural worlds. This development, I argue, which is seen most clearly in Coleridge's personal and published writings, represents the single most important step in the evolution of the fantasy genre before the advent of hyperspace philosophies, which such dreamworld constructions were themselves instrumental in bringing about. A hitherto unexplored idea, this conceptual development not only represents the close areas of overlap between Gothic and Romantic as generic and historical classifiers, but it also gave literature and science a medium through which to access the supernatural realm, and led directly to the flourishing of interest in dreams, mesmerism and spiritualism as the century progressed.

Indeed, it is within the transition from the Romantic to the Victorian eras that Coleridge's concepts were expanded upon by writers such as De Quincey and Shelley, who were heavily influenced by Coleridge's work, and shared his interest in the relationship between dreams and supernatural space. Uniting Coleridge's notions of Somnial Space with the developing phenomena of mesmerism and spiritualism, both De Quincey and Shelley not only translate Coleridge's concepts from the Romantic to the Victorian, but also facilitate the transition of literary explorations of dream space from poetry to the newly dominant medium of prose. In the analysis of representations of hyperspace in these writers, my thesis offers a new approach for De Quincey and Shelley studies that casts interesting light on their relationship with their intellectual and cultural environments.

Significantly, it was in this medium of prose that Coleridge's concept of liminal dream space would find its fullest expression, as writers such as Dickens, heavily influenced by De Quincey, engage with the growing popular and intellectual discourses on dreams and the

supernatural to popularize the relationship between them in widely disseminated and influential novels and short stories. Along with Dickens, Kingsley is one of the first to use the dream as a medium through which the protagonist enters supernatural space, though his fairyland is overlaid within and upon the natural world. However, it is in the comparison between the early and later works of Carroll and MacDonald that the most crucial steps in the evolution of the fantasy genre are witnessed. As explored in the final chapter, while their early fiction uses the medium of the dream to transport the protagonist into a secondary world contained within this dream space, their later fictions adopt the emerging hyperspace philosophies to reconceptualise the kinds of imaginative worlds available to fantasy writers, and the relationship that these worlds bore to the natural world.

While Carroll's texts remain intellectually humorous, MacDonald's 'high seriousness of tone' (Prickett *Victorian Fantasy* 92), and his deep metaphysical yearnings allow him to take his later fiction beyond the limits of previous writers, and directly prefigure (if not represent) the birth of the modern fantasy genre. Like the spiritualists who adopted hyperspace philosophies, MacDonald's *Lilith* relates higher-dimensional space with the spiritual realm, and uses hyperspace philosophy to weave magical elements equally throughout the natural and supernatural worlds. This layering of the spiritual over the physical world, my thesis demonstrates, is one of the most significant steps in the evolution of the modern fantasy genre, as it suggests that these dimensions constitute one space – a layered, fantastic secondary world – that forms an integral link between the dream worlds of Coleridge and the secondary worlds of Morris. In its thematic and conceptual resonances with both Coleridgean and Morrisian literary constructs, therefore, MacDonald's text stands as important evidence that the modern fantasy genre evolved over the course of the nineteenth century through its adoption of early models of hyperspace – dream worlds and supernatural realms – to imaginatively explore the conditions of other worlds.

Importantly, this original examination of dreams as a philosophical, spatial construction in a context of speculation about supernatural space reclaims the 'framing device' of the dream from critics who see it as a factor that discounts texts from inclusion within the fantasy genre, and resituates it within a complex matrix of literary, scientific, and psychological investigation into the supernatural world. In this important critical reconceptualisation, dreams are seen not as excusatory devices used to 'explain away' the magic world of a text, but rather, in the context of spatial inquiry that this thesis has explored, as part of a wider nineteenth-century philosophy of the mind, space and the supernatural that links these three

items together to posit dreams and similarly altered states of mind as quite literal gateways into a higher realm – a hyperspace – occupied by the supernatural. When seen in light of this quite serious philosophy of the mind and higher space, the later nineteenth-century fantasies that use the dream as a vehicle to access an otherwise separate world become part of a wider ongoing Victorian dialogue on the nature of space, reality, perception and mental states. This view of dreams and their dual material and psychological reality destabilises the borders of the fantasy genre as it has traditionally been conceived, and suggests that both a wider scope, and a more historically grounded approach to the evolution of imaginative literature are fruitful directions for literary criticism.

This thesis represents a fresh step in the direction of literary criticism that aims both to recontextualise past literature within its historical and philosophical contexts, and use this historical grounding to foster new ways of conceptualising the rich meanings that these texts still have to offer the modern reader. In tracing the evolution of the modern fantasy genre against a long line of literary and scientific conceptions of dreams, space, and the supernatural, this original approach hopes to demonstrate the value of hyperspace as both a historical concept with significant impacts upon society and literature, and as an interpretive device for new directions in literary criticism itself.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY (LITERARY) SOURCES

- Carroll, Lewis. *Alice in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass. The Annotated Alice: The Definitive Edition*. Ed. Martin Gardner. New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 2000.
- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. *Anima Poetæ from the Unpublished Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. Ed. E. H. Coleridge. London: William Heinemann, 1895.
- . *Biographia Literaria*. Ed. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate. 2 vols. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983.
- . *Christabel*. 1816. *Coleridge's Poetry and Prose*. Ed. N. Halmi, P. Magnuson and R. Modiano. New York: Norton, 2004. 162-79.
- . *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. Ed. Earl Leslie Griggs. 4 vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 1966.
- . 'Lewis's Romance of the Monk.' *Critical Review* 19 (February 1797): 194-8.
- . *Marginalia*. Ed. George Whalley. 3 vols. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980.
- . *The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. Ed. Kathleen Coburn. 4 vols. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957.
- . *The Friend*. Ed. Barbara Rooke. 2 vols. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969.
- . 'The Pains of Sleep.' 1816. *Coleridge's Poetry and Prose*. Ed. N. Halmi, P. Magnuson and R. Modiano. New York: Norton, 2004. 184.
- . *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. 1834. *Coleridge's Poetry and Prose*. Ed. N. Halmi, P. Magnuson and R. Modiano. New York: Norton, 2004. 59-99.

---. *Table Talk*. Ed. Carl Woodring. 2 vols. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1990.

De Quincey, Thomas. *The Collected Writings of Thomas De Quincey*. Ed. David Masson. 14 vols. Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1889-90.

---. 'Animal Magnetism.' *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* 4 (1834): 456-74.

Dickens, Charles. 'A Madman's Manuscript.' 1836. *Ghost Stories*. London: Collector's Library, 2009. 26-36.

---. 'The Goblins who Stole a Sexton.' 1836. *Ghost Stories*. London: Collector's Library, 2009. 37-51.

---. 'The Signalman.' 1866. *Ghost Stories*. London: Collector's Library, 2009. 303-20.

Kingsley, Charles. *The Water Babies: A Fairy Tale for a Landbaby*. 1863. Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Classics, 1994.

MacDonald, George. *Lilith*. 1895. Los Angeles: Indo-European, 2012.

---. *Phantastes: A Faerie Romance*. 1858. *Works of Fancy and Imagination*. Vols. 5 and 6. London: Strahan, 1871.

Morris, William. *The Well at the World's End*. 1896. 2 vols. London: Pan/Ballantine, 1971.

---. *The Wood Beyond the World*. 1894. London: George Prior, 1979.

Radcliffe, Ann. *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. 1794. Ed. Jacqueline Howard. London: Penguin, 2001.

Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein*. 1831. *Three Gothic Novels*. London: Penguin, 1986. 257-497.

Walpole, Horace. *The Castle of Otranto*. Ed. Jacqueline Howard. London: Penguin, 2001.

SECONDARY SOURCES

- Abbott, Edwin A. *Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions by a Square*. 1884. 5th ed. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1963.
- Abrams, M. H. *The Milk of Paradise: The Effect of Opium Visions on the works of De Quincey, Crabbe, Francis Thompson and Coleridge*. Boston: Harvard UP, 1934.
- Academicus. 'On the Absurdities of the Modern Stage.' *Monthly Mirror* 10 (September 1800): 180-2.
- Adair, Patricia M. *The Waking Dream: A Study of Coleridge's Poetry*. London: Edward Arnold, 1967.
- Aguirre, Manuel. 'Geometries of Terror: Numinous Spaces in Gothic, Horror and Science Fiction.' *Gothic Studies* 10.2 (2008): 1-17.
- . 'Liminal Terror: The Poetics of Gothic Space.' *The Dynamics of the Threshold: Essays on Liminal Negotiations*. Ed. Jesus Benito and Anna Ma Manzananas. Madrid: The Gateway Press, 2006.
- Aikin, J. and A. L. *Miscellaneous Pieces, in Prose: by J. and A. L. Aikin*. 1773. Michigan: Ann Arbor, 2009.
- Baldick, Chris. *In Frankenstein's Shadow: Myth, Monstrosity and Nineteenth-Century Writing*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1987.
- Barrett Browning, Elizabeth. *The Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning*. Ed. Frederic G. Kenyon. Vol. 1. London, 1898.
- Barth, Robert J. and John Mahoney (eds.) *Coleridge, Keats and the Dreaming Imagination: Romanticism and Adam's Dream; Essays in Honour of Walter Jackson Bate*. Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 1990.

- Bate, Jonathan. *Shakespeare and the English Romantic Imagination*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1986.
- Baxter, Andrew. *An Enquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul; wherein the Immateriality of the Soul is Evinc'd from the Principles of Reason and Philosophy*. 2nd ed. Vol. 2. London, 1737.
- Benedict, Barbara M. 'Readers, Writers, Reviewers, and the Professionalisation of Literature' *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature 1740-1830*. Ed. Thomas Keymer and Jon Mee. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004. 3-23.
- Bilbro, Jeffrey. "'Yet more spacious Space": Higher-Dimensional Imagination from *Flatland* to *Lilith*.' *North Wind* 28 (2009): 1-12.
- Black, Joel D. 'Levana: Levitation in Jean Paul and Thomas de Quincey.' *Comparative Literature* 32.1 (1980): 42-62.
- Boaden, James. 'A Ghostly Performance' (1794) *Memoirs of the Life of John Philip Kemble*. Vol. 2. London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1825. 115-19.
- Bosse, Heinrich. 'The Marvellous and Romantic Semiotics.' *Studies in Romanticism* 14.3 (1975): 211-234.
- Botting, Fred. 'In Gothic Darkly: Heterotopia, History, Culture.' *A Companion to the Gothic*. Ed. David Punter. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2001. 3-14.
- Bown, Nicola. 'What is the Stuff that Dreams are Made of?' *The Victorian Supernatural*. Ed. Nicola Bown, Carolyn Burdett, and Pamela Thurschwell. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004. 151-72.
- Bown, Nicola, Carolyn Burdett, and Pamela Thurschwell, eds. *The Victorian Supernatural*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004.
- Brawley, Chris. 'The Ideal and The Shadow: George MacDonald's *Phantastes*.' *North Wind: Journal of George MacDonald Studies* 25 (2006): 91-112.

- Bray, Charles. *Force, its Mental and Moral Correlates and on that which is supposed to underlie all phenomena: with speculations on Spiritualism, and other abnormal conditions of mind*. London, 1866.
- Brooks, Peter. 'Godlike Science/Unhallowed Arts: Language and Monstrosity in *Frankenstein*.' *New Literary History* 9.3 (1978): 591-605.
- Buck, Charles. 'A Meeting with Mrs Radcliffe' c. 1822. *On the Beauties, Harmonies, and Sublimities of Nature*. New Ed. 3 Vols. London: Thomas Tegg and Son, 1837.
- Burke, Edmund. *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. Pall-Mall: R. and J. Dodsley, 1757.
- Burney, Fanny. *Evelina*. 1778. New York: Norton, 1998.
- Burwick, Frederick. 'The Dream-Visions of Jean Paul and Thomas De Quincey.' *Comparative Literature* 20.1 (1968): 1-26.
- Butler, Marilyn. 'Frankenstein and Radical Science.' *Frankenstein*. Ed. J. Paul Hunter. New York: Norton, 1996. 302-12.
- Byrns, Richard H. 'De Quincey's Revisions in the "Dream-Fugue".' *PMLA* 77.1 (1962): 97-101.
- Carter, Margaret L. *Spectre or Delusion? The Supernatural in Gothic Fiction*. London: Ann Arbor, 1987.
- Castle, Terry. 'Phantasmagoria: Spectral Technology and the Metaphorics of Modern Reverie.' *Critical Inquiry* 15.1 (1988): 26-61.
- Clemens, Valdine. *The Return of the Repressed: Gothic Horror from The Castle of Otranto to Alien*. Albany: State U of New York P, 1999.

- Clery, E. J. 'The Genesis of "Gothic" Fiction.' *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*. Ed. J. E. Hogle. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006. 21-39.
- . *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction, 1762-1800*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995.
- Coburn, Kathleen. *Experience into Thought; Perspectives in the Coleridge Notebooks*. Toronto: Toronto UP, 1979.
- Collins, Robert A. 'Liminality in *Lilith*.' *Lilith in a New Light*. Ed. L. H. Harriman. Jefferson: McFarland, 2008. 7-14.
- Comitini, Patricia. 'The Limits of Discourse and the Ideology of Form in Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein".' *Keats-Shelley Journal* 55 (2006): 179-198.
- Connor, Steven. 'Afterword.' *The Victorian Supernatural*. Ed. Nicola Bown, Carolyn Burdett, and Pamela Thurschwell. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004. 258-77.
- Cosslett, Tess. *The 'Scientific Movement' and Victorian Literature*. Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1982.
- Craig, Hardin and J. M. Thomas. *English Prose of the Nineteenth Century*. 1929. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1957.
- Crawford, Joseph. 'The Haunting of Thomas De Quincey.' *The Cambridge Quarterly* 40.3 (2011): 224-242.
- Dendurent, H. O. *Thomas De Quincey: A Reference Guide*. George Prior Publishers: London, 1978.
- Devlin, D. D. *De Quincey, Wordsworth and the Art of Prose*. London: Macmillan 1983.
- Docherty, John. *The Literary Products of the Lewis Carroll-George MacDonald Friendship*. Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1995.

- Duffy, Cian. ““His *Canaille* of an Audience”: Thomas De Quincey and the Revolution in Reading.’ *SiR* 44 (2005): 7-22.
- Ellis, Kate Ferguson. *The Contested Castle: Gothic Novels and the Subversion of Domestic Ideology*. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1989.
- Fara, Patricia. ‘Educating Mary: Women and Scientific Literature in the Early Nineteenth Century’ *Frankenstein’s Science: Experimentation and Discovery in Romantic Culture, 1780-1830*. Ed. C. Knellwolf and J. Goodall. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008. 17-32.
- Fay, Elizabeth. ‘Hallucinogenesis: Thomas De Quincey’s Mind Trips.’ *SiR* 49 (2010): 293-312.
- Fino, Ralph. *The Haunted Castle: A Study of the Elements of English Romanticism*. London: Routledge, 1927.
- Fletcher, Angus. ““Positive Negation”: Threshold, Sequence, and Personification in Coleridge,’ *New Perspectives on Coleridge and Wordsworth: Selected Papers from the English Institute*. Ed. Geoffrey Hartman. New York and London: Columbia UP, 1972.
- Ford, Jennifer. *Coleridge on Dreaming: Romanticism, Dreams and the Medical Imagination*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998.
- Forster, E. M. ‘Fantasy.’ 1927. *Aspects of the Novel and Related Writing*. London: Edward Arnold, 1974: 73-85.
- Foster, James R. *History of the Pre-Romantic Novel in England*. London: Oxford UP, 1949.
- Frankland, Graham. *Freud’s Literary Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000.
- Frow, John. *Genre*. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Gamer, Michael. *Romanticism and the Gothic: Genre, Reception, and Canon Formation*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000.

- Gardner, Martin. *The Annotated Alice: The Definitive Edition*. New York: Norton, 2000.
- Gholami, Mehrdad. *Politics of Liminality in Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner": An Anthropological Study*. Diss. U of Tehran, 2009. Lambert Academic Publishing, 2012.
- Glance, Jonathan. "'Beyond the Usual Bounds of Reverie'? Another Look at the Dreams in *Frankenstein*.' *The Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts* 7.4 (1996): 30-47.
- Goodall, Jane. 'Electrical Romanticism' *Frankenstein's Science: Experimentation and Discovery in Romantic Culture, 1780-1830*. Ed. C. Knellwolf and J. Goodall. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008. 117-32.
- . *Stage Presence*. Oxon: Routledge, 2008.
- Goodwin, Sarah Webster. 'Domesticity and Uncanny Kitsch in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and *Frankenstein*.' *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 10.1 (1991): 93-108.
- Grant, Edward. *Much Ado About Nothing: Theories of Space and Vacuum from the Middle Ages to the Scientific Revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1981.
- Gray, William. *Fantasy, Myth and the Measure of Truth*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
- Griggs, Earl Lesley. 'Coleridge and Byron.' *PMLA* 45.4 (1930): 1085-97.
- Harris, Jason Marc. *Folklore and the Fantastic in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008.
- Hayter, Alethea. *Opium and the Romantic Imagination*. London: Faber and Faber, 1968.
- Heller, Terry. *The Delights of Terror: An Aesthetics of the Tale of Terror*. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1987.

- Hennelly, Jr., Mark M. “‘As Well Fill Up the Space between’: A Liminal Reading of “Christabel”.’ *Studies in Romanticism* 38.2 (1999): 203-22.
- Herbert, Christopher. ‘De Quincey and Dickens.’ *Victorian Studies* 17.3 (1974): 247-63.
- Hindle, Maurice. ‘Vital Matters: Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* and Romantic Science.’ *Critical Survey* 2.1 (1990): 29-35.
- Hinton, Charles. *A New Era of Thought*. London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1888.
- Hogle, J. E., ed. ‘Introduction: The Gothic in Western Culture.’ *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006. 1-20.
- Hogsette, David S. ‘Metaphysical Intersections in *Frankenstein*: Shelley’s Theistic Investigation of Scientific Materialism and Transgressive Autonomy.’ *Christianity and Literature* 60.4 (2011): 531-59.
- Howard, Jacqueline. Introduction. *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. 1794. Ed. Jacqueline Howard. London: Penguin, 2001.
- Hume, Kathryn. *Fantasy and Mimesis: Responses to Reality in Western Literature*. New York: Methuen, 1984.
- Hume, Robert D. ‘Gothic Versus Romantic: A Revaluation of the Gothic Novel.’ *PMLA* 84.2 (1969): 282-90.
- Hunter, J. Paul. Preface. *Frankenstein*. New York: Norton, 1996. 302-312.
- Hurd, Richard. *Letters on Chivalry and Romance*. London: printed for A. Millar, in the Strand; and W. Thurlbourn and J. Woodyer, in Cambridge, 1762.
- Jackson, Rosemary. *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion*. London: Methuen, 1981.

- Jackson, Ian. 'Science as Spectacle: Electrical Showmanship in the English Enlightenment' *Frankenstein's Science: Experimentation and Discovery in Romantic Culture, 1780-1830*. Ed. C. Knellwolf and J. Goodall. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008. 151-166.
- Kant, Immanuel. 'Dreams of a Spirit-Seer.' 1766. Trans. Emanuel F. Goerwitz. Ed. Frank Sewall. London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1900.
- . *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*. 1783. Ed. and Trans. Paul Carus. Chicago: Open Court, 1949.
- Kaplan, Fred. *Dickens and Mesmerism: The Hidden Springs of Fiction*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1975.
- Karlin, Daniel. 'Browning, Elizabeth Barrett, and "Mesmerism"' *Victorian Poetry*, 27:3/4 (1989): 65-77.
- Katritzky, Linde. 'Coleridge's Links with Leading Men of Science.' *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London* 49.2 (1995): 261- 276.
- Kelly, Michael. 'Reminiscences of M. G. Lewis.' 1797. *Reminiscences of Michael Kelly*. Vol 2. London: Henry Colburn, 1826. 140-3.
- Ketterer, David. 'Frankenstein's "Conversion" from Natural Magic to Modern Science: And a "Shifted (And Converted) Last Draft Insert.' *Science Fiction Studies* 24.1 (1997): 57-78.
- Keymer, Thomas, and Jon Mee. 'Preface.' *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature 1740-1830*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004. xi-xv.
- Kimball, Kathryn. 'Coleridge's Dream Theory and the Dual Imagination.' *Coleridge Bulletin* ns 16 (2000): 80-86.
- Kincaid, James R. "'Words Cannot Express": *Frankenstein's* Tripping on the Tongue.' *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 24.1 (1990): 26-47.

- Kirkby, Joan. 'Shadows of the Invisible World: Mesmer, Swedenborg and the Spiritualist Sciences' *Frankenstein's Science: Experimentation and Discovery in Romantic Culture, 1780-1830*. Ed. C. Knellwolf and J. Goodall. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008. 99-115.
- Knellwolf, Christa. 'Geographic Boundaries and Inner Space: *Frankenstein*, Scientific Explorations and the Quest for the Absolute' *Frankenstein's Science: Experimentation and Discovery in Romantic Culture, 1780-1830*. Ed. C. Knellwolf and J. Goodall. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008. 49-69.
- Knellwolf, Christa and Jane Goodall. Introduction. *Frankenstein's Science: Experimentation and Discovery in Romantic Culture, 1780-1830*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008. 1-16.
- Landow, George P. 'And the World Became Strange: Realms of Literary Fantasy.' *The Georgia Review* 33.1 (1979): 7-42.
- Lau, Beth. 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner and *Frankenstein*.' *Samuel Taylor Coleridge and the Sciences of Life*. Ed. Nicholas Roe. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001. 207-23.
- Levine, George. "'Frankenstein' and the Tradition of Realism.' *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 7.1 (1973): 14-30.
- Levy, Michelle. 'Discovery and the Domestic Affections in Coleridge and Shelley.' *SEL* 44.4 (2004): 693-713.
- Lewis, C. S. 'William Morris.' *The Literary Essays of C. S. Lewis*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1980. 219-31.
- Longeuil, Alfred E. 'The Word "Gothic" in Eighteenth-Century Criticism.' *MLN* 38 (1923): 453-60.
- Lowes, John Livingston. *The Road to Xanadu: A Study in the Ways of the Imagination*. 1927. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1964.
- Luckhurst, Roger. *The Invention of Telepathy. 1879-1901*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002.

- MacAndrew, Elizabeth. *The Gothic Tradition in Fiction*. New York: Columbia UP, 1979.
- MacDonald, George. 'The Fantastic Imagination' and 'The Imagination: Its Function and its Culture' in *A Dish of Orts: Chiefly Papers on the Imagination and Shakespeare*. 1893. Whitehorn: Johannesen, 1996.
- MacDonald, Greville. *George MacDonald and His Wife*. London, 1924.
- Makdisi, Saree Samir. 'Shelley's *Alastor*: Travel Beyond the Limit.' *Romantic Geographies: Discourses of Travel 1775-1844*. Ed. Amanda Gilroy. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2000. 240-257.
- Manlove, Colin. 'The Circle of the Imagination: George MacDonald's *Phantastes* and *Lilith*.' *Studies in Scottish Literature* 17.1 (1982): 55-80.
- . 'Did William Morris Start MacDonald Writing Fantasy?' *North Wind* 24 (2005): 61-73.
- . *Modern Fantasy: Five Studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1975.
- . 'Scottish Fantasy.' *Extrapolation* 35.1 (1994): 15-32.
- Matthews, Richard. *Fantasy: The Liberation of Imagination*. New York: Twayne, 1997.
- Maxwell, Richard and Katie Trumpener. Eds. *The Cambridge Companion to Fiction in the Romantic Period*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2008.
- Maxwell-Stuart, P. G. *Ghosts: A History of Phantoms, Ghouls and Other Spirits of the Dead*. Gloucestershire: Tempus, 2006.
- Mayhew, Robert T. 'Latitudinarianism and the Novels of Ann Radcliffe.' *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 44.3 (2002): 273-301.
- McKillop, Alan D. 'Mrs. Radcliffe on the Supernatural in Poetry.' *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 31.3 (1932): 352- 359.

- McNeill, Lynne S. 'The Waving Ones: Cats, Folklore, and the Experiential Source Hypothesis.' *What Are the Animals to Us? Approaches from Science, Religion, Folklore, Literature and Art*. Ed. David Aftandilian. Knoxville: U of Tennessee P, 2007. 5-20.
- Mellor, Anne K. *Mary Shelley: Her Life, Her Fiction, Her Monsters*. New York: Routledge, 1988.
- Mendelson, Michael. 'George MacDonald's Lilith and the Conventions of Ascent.' *Studies in Scottish Literature* 20.1 (1985): 197-218.
- Mendlesohn, Farah. *Rhetorics of Fantasy*. Middletown: Wesleyan, 2008.
- Meurs, Nora. 'Resisting the Silence: Coleridge's Courtship of the Sublime.' *The Coleridge Bulletin* ns 25 (2005): 40-45.
- Miall, David. 'The Meaning of Dreams: Coleridge's Ambivalence.' *Studies in Romanticism* 21 (1982): 57-87.
- Miles, Robert. 'The 1790s: the effulgence of Gothic' *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*. Ed. Jerrold E. Hogle. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006. 41-62.
- Miller, Rand. 'The Being and Becoming of *Frankenstein*.' *Substance* 18.3 (1989): 60-74.
- Mishra, Vijay. *The Gothic Sublime*. Albany: State U of New York P, 1994.
- Moers, Ellen. 'Female Gothic: The Monster's Mother.' *Frankenstein*. Ed. J. Paul Hunter. New York: Norton, 1996. 214-24.
- Morrison, Robert. 'Opium-Eaters and Magazine Wars: De Quincey and Coleridge in 1821.' *Victorian Periodicals Review* 30.1 (1997): 27-40.
- Naslas, Michael. 'Medievalism in Morris's Aesthetic Theory.' *JWMS* 5.1 (1982): 16-24.

- Nethercot, A. H. *The Road to Tryermaine*. 1939. New York: Russell and Russell, 1962.
- Neuhouser, David L. 'C.S. Lewis, George MacDonald, and Mathematics.' *Wingfold* 9 (1995): 17-28.
- . 'Mathematics, Science, and George MacDonald.' *Journal of the Association of Christians in the Mathematical Sciences* 1 (2004): 1-12.
- Newcomb, S. 'The Philosophy of Hyperspace.' *Science* ns 7.158 (1898): 1-7.
- Noakes, Richard. 'Spiritualism, Science and the Supernatural in Mid-Victorian Britain.' *The Victorian Supernatural*. Ed. Nicola Bown, Carolyn Burdett, and Pamela Thurschwell. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004. 23-43.
- Norton, Rictor. *Gothic Readings: The First Wave, 1764-1840*. New York: Leicester UP, 2000.
- Oppenheim, Janet. *The Other World: Spiritualism and Psychical Research in England, 1850-1914*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985.
- O'Rourke, James. 'The 1831 Introduction and Revisions to *Frankenstein*: Mary Shelley Dictates Her Legacy.' *Studies in Romanticism* 38.3 (1999): 365-385.
- Otto, Peter. *Multiplying Worlds: Romanticism, Modernity, and the Emergence of Virtual Reality*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2011.
- Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy*. Trans. John W. Harvey. New York: Oxford UP, 1958.
- Patterson, Charles I. 'De Quincey's Conception of the Novel as Literature of Power' *PMLA* 70.3 (1955): 375-89.
- Pickover, Clifford A. *Surfing Through Hyperspace: Understanding Higher Universes in Six Easy Lessons*. New York: Oxford UP, 1999.

Prevost, Rev. F., and F. Blangdon, eds. *Flowers of Literature; for 1801 & 1802*. London: B. Crosby, 1803. 393-4.

Prickett, Stephen. 'The Two Worlds of George MacDonald.' *North Wind* 2 (1983): 14-23.

---. *Victorian Fantasy*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1975.

Punter, David. *The Literature of Terror: A History of Gothic Fictions from 1765 to the Present Day*. Vol. 1. Harlow: Longman, 1996.

Punter, David, and Glennis Byron. *The Gothic*. Malden: Blackwell, 2004.

Purkiss, Dianne. *Troublesome Things: A History of Fairies and Fairy Stories*. London: Penguin, 2000.

Radcliffe, Ann. 'On the Supernatural in Poetry. By the Late Mrs. Radcliffe.' *New Monthly Magazine* (1826): 145-52.

Railo, F. *The Haunted Castle: A Study of the Elements of English Romanticism*. Routledge: London, 1927.

Richardson, Alan. *British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001.

Richter, Jean Paul. Preface to 'Des deutschen Mittelalters Volksglauben und Heroen-Sagen.' *Samtliche Werke, Historisch-kritische, Ausgabe*. Ed. E. Berend. Weimar: Bohlau, 1938.

Roberts, Daniel Sanjiv. 'Exorcising the Malay: Dreams and the Unconscious in Coleridge and De Quincey.' *The Wordsworth Circle* 24 (1993): 91-96.

Rule, Phillip C. *Coleridge and Newman: The Centrality of Conscience*. New York: Fordham UP, 2004.

- Russell, Gillian. 'Keats, popular culture, and the sociability of theatre.' *Romanticism and Popular Culture in Britain and Ireland*. Ed. Philip Connell and Nigel Leask. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009. 194-213.
- . 'Theatrical Culture.' *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature: 1740-1830*. Ed. Thomas Keymer and Jon Mee. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004. 100-118.
- Saler, Michael T. *As If: Modern Enchantment and the Literary Pre-History of Virtual Reality*. New York: Oxford UP, 2012.
- Salmon, Nicholas. 'MacDonald, Morris and "The Retreat".' *JWMS* 12.3 (1997): 5-10.
- Schmitt, Cannon. *Alien Nation: Nineteenth-Century Gothic Fictions and English Nationality*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1997.
- Schneider, Elizabeth. *Coleridge, Opium and 'Khubla Khan'*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1953.
- Schofield, A. T. *Another World*. 1888. London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1905.
- Schubert, Hermann. 'THE FOURTH DIMENSION. MATHEMATICAL AND SPIRITUALISTIC.' *The Monist* 3.3 (1893): 402-449.
- Schultz, Alexander. 'The Dangers of Imagination: Coleridgean Dreams and Nightmares.' *The Coleridge Bulletin* 25 (2005): 46-53.
- Scott, Walter (attrib.). Introduction. *The Castle of Otranto*. 1811. *Gothic Readings: The First Wave, 1764-1840*. New York: Leicester UP, 2000. 323-7.
- . 'Review of *The Fatal Revenge: Or, The Family of Montorio, A Romance*.' *Quarterly Review* 3 (1810): 339-48.
- Seward, Anna. 'Letter to C. Smyth 3 August 1794.' *The Letters of Anna Seward*. 6 vols. Edinburgh, 1811.
- Shaberman, R. B. 'George MacDonald and Lewis Carroll.' *North Wind* 1 (1982): 10-30.

- Shakespeare, William. *Macbeth*. Ed. Robert S. Miola. New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 2004.
- Shelden, Pamela J. 'Jamesian Gothicism: The Haunted Castle of the Mind.' *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 7.1 (1974): 121-34.
- Shug, Charles. 'The Romantic Form of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*.' *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 17.4 (1977): 607-19.
- Silver, Carole G. *Strange and Secret Peoples: Fairies and Victorian Consciousness*. New York: Oxford UP, 1999.
- Siskin, Clifford. *The Historicity of Romantic Discourse*. Oxford UP: Oxford, 1988.
- Smith, Charlotte. *The Banished Man*. 4 vols. London: T. Cadell, Jun. and W. Davies, 1794.
- St Clair, William. 'The Impact of *Frankenstein*.' *Mary Shelley in Her Times*. Ed. Betty T. Bennett and Stuart Curran. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 2000. 38-63.
- Stevenson, Robert Louis. *The Essays of Robert Louis Stevenson, A Selection*. London: MacDonald, 1950.
- Stock, R. D. *The Holy and the Demonic from Sir Thomas Browne to William Blake*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1982.
- Stockwell, Peter. Introduction. *Impossibility Fiction: Alternativity, Extrapolation, Speculation*. Ed. Peter Stockwell and Derek Littlewood. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996. 3-9.
- Talbot, Norman. 'The First Modern "Secondary World" Fantasy: Morris's Craftsmanship in *The Story of the Glittering Plain*.' *JWMS* 13.2 (1999): 3-11.
- Taylor, Anya. 'Coleridge's "Christabel" and the Phantom Soul.' *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 42.4 (2002): 707-730.

The Theory of Dreams: in which an inquiry is made into the powers and faculties of the human mind as they are illustrated in the most remarkable dreams recorded in sacred and profane history. 2 Vols. London: F. C. and J. Rivington, 1803. Harry Price Library of Magical Literature, Senate House Library, London.

Thomas, Ronald R. *Dreams of Authority: Freud and the Fictions of the Unconscious*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1990.

Thompson, G. R. (ed.). *The Gothic Imagination: Essays in Dark Romanticism*. No place: Washington State UP, 1974.

Throesch, Elizabeth. 'Nonsense in the Fourth Dimension of Literature: Hyperspace Philosophy, the "New" Mathematics, and the *Alice* Books.' *Alice Beyond Wonderland: Essays for the Twenty-first Century*. Ed. Christopher Hollingsworth. Iowa City: U of Iowa P, 2009. 37-52.

Thron, E. Michael. 'Thomas De Quincey and the Fall of Literature.' *Thomas De Quincey: Bicentenary Studies*. Ed. R. L. Snyder. London: U of Oklahoma P, 1985.

Thurschwell, Pamela. *Literature, Technology and Magical Thinking, 1880-1920*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001.

Todorov, Tzvetan. *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*. Trans. Richard Howard. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1980.

Tolkien, J. R. R. 'On Fairy-Stories.' 1939. *Tree and Leaf*. London: Harper Collins, 2001. 1-82.

Toor, Kiran. 'Dream Weaver: Samuel Taylor Coleridge and the Prefiguring of Jungian Dream Theory.' *The Coleridge Bulletin* ns 24 (2004): 83-90.

Turner, Victor. 'Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in *Rites de Passage*.' *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*. New York: Cornell UP, 1970. 93-111.

- Twitchell, James B. *The Living Dead: A Study of the Vampire in Romantic Literature*. Durham: Duke UP, 1981.
- . 'The Supernatural Structure of Byron's *Manfred*.' *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 15.4 Nineteenth Century (1975): 601-14.
- Vallins, David, ed. *On the Sublime*. S. T. Coleridge. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.
- Van Gennep, Arnold. *The Rites of Passage*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1960.
- Varma, Devendra, P. *The Gothic Flame*. New York: Russell and Russell, 1966.
- Varnado, S. L. *Haunted Presence: The Numinous in Gothic Fiction*. Tuscaloosa: U of Alabama P, 1987.
- Vickers, Neil. *Coleridge and the Doctors, 1795-1806*. Oxford: Clarendon, 2004.
- Victor, Benjamin. *History of the Theatres of London and Dublin from 1730*. III, 1771. 22-24.
- Watt, James. *Contesting the Gothic: Fiction, Genre, and Cultural Conflict, 1764-1832*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999.
- Webb, William L. 'Beheld from the Other Side.' *North Wind* 10 (1991): 14-18.
- . 'George MacDonald and Jean Paul: An Introduction.' *North Wind* 14 (1995): 65-71.
- Wertheim, Margaret. *The Pearly Gates of Cyberspace: A History of Space from Dante to the Internet*. Sydney: Doubleday, 1999.
- Whitehead, Christina. *Castles of the Mind: A Study of Medieval Architectural Allegory*. Cardiff: U of Wales P, 2003.
- Winter, Alison. *Mesmerized: Powers of Mind in Victorian Britain*. Chicago: Chicago UP, 1998.

Wonderful Prophecies: Being a dissertation on the existence, nature, and extent of the prophetic powers in the human mind: with unquestionable examples of several eminent prophecies, of what is now acting, and soon to be fulfilled, upon the great theatre of Europe. Fourth Ed. London: Crosby, 1795. Harry Price Library of Magical Literature, Senate House Library, London.

Wright, Julia M. ““Little England”: Anxieties of Space in Mary Shelley’s *The Last Man*” *Mary Shelley’s Fictions: From Frankenstein to Faulkner*. Ed. Michael Eberle-Sinatra. Houndmills: Macmillan Press, 2000. 129-49.

Ziolkowski, Theodore, ‘Science, Frankenstein, and Myth.’ *The Sewanee Review* 89.1 (1981): 34-56.

Zipes, Jack. *When Dreams Came True: Classical Fairy Tales and Their Tradition*. New York: Routledge, 1999.